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LOIS WEEDON LECTURES

ON

THE ALTAR AND THE CROSS:

BEING

A NARRATIVE OF THE ATONEMENT

FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION.

BY

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PREFACE.

BEYOND all question two of the holiest spots on the face of the earth are, the site of *The Temple*, with its typical Altar of Atonement, and the place of *The Cross*, with the Sepulchre of Christ. And yet, for many hundred years, no one has been able to say convincingly and with authority, *That* is the place of the one,—*That* the site of the other.

The strange fact is all the more keenly felt in Jerusalem itself. You visit what is undoubtedly the Temple area, and taking the only authentic historical guide, find it nearly twice the extent which he gives of the bounds of the Temple. You ask for the church built over the Holy Sepulchre, and taking there also

the only authentic historical guides, find the church and the guides in opposition ; the church standing inside the City, and placed on the side of a hill.

With a feeling of devout interest, the writer of the following pages entered on a close examination of the subject ; and having arrived at, what was to him, a certain conclusion on each of the disputed points, he gave expression to his thoughts in his published work on ‘The Temple and the Sepulchre.’

Though some little research was necessarily shown in order to prove his argument, he found, somewhat to his surprise, that an interest in the subject had thus been awakened in the minds of his people,—an ordinary congregation of a purely agricultural parish.

That interest he thought might be turned to account, and from possibly a mere inoperative sentiment, be led on to some real work of edification in Scriptural knowledge.

To attain this object,—to show how the site of the Temple, with its Altar of blood, sends back the thoughts to the origin of sacrifice,—and the place of the Cross, with the Sepulchre of Christ, to its end,—was the aim of the following Lectures, which are now published almost word for word as they were delivered from the pulpit of his parish church.

VICARAGE, LOIS WEEDON :

August 1866.

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I

THE FALL OF ADAM, AND THE ALTAR
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REVELATION xiii. 8.

The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

To my great satisfaction, mingled with some surprise, I find that the subject of the actual sites in Jerusalem of the Temple and the Sepulchre, of the Altar and the Cross, has awakened in the minds of many of my congregation very considerable interest.

And yet, knowing your acquaintance with Scripture, it ought not to surprise me; for in reality the subject recalls to the well-informed mind some of the most important circumstances of the Bible.

Now, my brethren, I am very desirous to keep up that interest, and to build on it, if by God's help I can carry out my design, some solid instruction. I hope to show you that the subject, duly considered, will make you masters

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of the whole scheme and intention of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

This is a large promise, and I proceed at once with my endeavour to fulfil it.

On Mount Moriah, then, we can view at this moment the actual site of the Temple—the place which God Himself called ‘an House of sacrifice.’* There stood the last altar of burnt-offerings, which, however, important and indispensable as they were, could never of themselves take away sins.

On the same mountain, as I believe, face to face with the site of that Altar, stood The Cross. On that Cross, as on an altar, was offered up the true Sacrifice, to which all other sacrifices tended†—the sacrifice of Christ—the sacrifice of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. It is no great wonder, then, I repeat, that you feel an interest in these holy places, which are so very suggestive and awaken in the mind so many thoughts. Give me your attention further for a few Sundays, and I will tell you, from beginning to end, what reflec-

* 2 Chron. vii. 12.

† Hebrews x. 26.

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tions a close examination of the subject has awakened in myself.

One word more of preface, however, before we begin. I am speaking as a minister of the Church of England, to members of the same. We have thus one great advantage over many ; for, professing as we do to believe in the inspiration of the canonical Scriptures, if we are honest in our profession we are guarded from all controversy upon that point. To us, our premisses are certain, our credentials clear. All we have to do is to interpret those Scriptures by the acknowledged rules of sound criticism ; and then, by God's blessing and the guidance of His good Spirit, we may arrive at true conclusions upon the subject before us, of infinite importance to our happiness and safety.

Our text, to commence with, is '*The Lamb*'—meaning the Lamb of God, His Son Jesus Christ—'*The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*' And our first inquiry will naturally be, What made it necessary that the Lamb should be slain at all?

It is a real tale, my brethren, of the bitterest sorrow, and yet abounding with joy and hope.

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For, the Lord God said at the beginning, ‘Let Us make man in Our image.’* And through the agency of the Word, His blessed Son, He created Adam and Eve, and placed them in the Garden of Eden for the man to dress it and to keep it. And God looked down from heaven upon earth, and behold all was very good. All nature smiled with beauty, and all living creatures were docile and obedient to man, and realized the truth of what, in figure, will at some time be seen upon earth again. For the wolf dwelt with the lamb, and the leopard lay down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together.† One simple command—sole daughter of his voice—did the Lord God give unto man—that of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he should not eat; for, in the day that he ate thereof, he should surely die.‡

And there was war in heaven; § for, Satan had risen up and rebelled against God; and Michael and his angels fought with Satan; and

* Gen. i. 26, ii. 15; John i. 3.

† Isa. xi. 6. ‡ Gen. ii. 17. § Rev. xii. 7, 8, 9.

Satan fought and his angels. And they prevailed not, nor was their place found in heaven any more for ever. And Satan was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And the Word which was in the beginning with God, and was God,* saw Satan at his overthrow fall, like lightning, from heaven; † and bare witness to the fact in after-times, when He was made flesh and conversed with His disciples. And Satan fell upon the earth in the midst of Paradise; and ‘Woe,’ cried the angels in heaven, ‘woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’ ‡

And Satan looked with envy on the happiness which he saw in Eden, and sought how to destroy it; and soon found an instrument ready to his hand. For, the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field; § and into him the malignant Spirit entered, and gave him a voluble tongue and wily speech. And the serpent found means to light upon Eve by herself. We may conceive the fair creature of Paradise with

* John i. 1, 2.

† Rev. xii. 12.

† Luke x. 17, 18.

§ Gen. iii. 1.

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enamelled body and burnished * neck of verdant gold; how, as he approached his victim, he raised himself upwards, fold upon fold erect, and, with head crested aloft, thus poured his guile into the woman's ear: 'Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' And she said 'We may eat of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of one special tree, that which is in the centre of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.' And the serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, who was a liar from the beginning, said to the woman 'Ye shall not surely die!'[†]

I bid you solemnly mark this, my brethren. Satan still exists, [‡] and is still about us invisibly—for he is a spirit—ever tempting us to disobey God's commands, ever beguiling us with the same falsehood, that, if we disobey, we shall not surely die,—die, that is, that second death of endless woe.

I bid you mark, too, the unerring testimony of St. Paul himself to the actual occurrence of these events in Paradise. Writing to the

* Par. Lost, b. ix.

† Gen. iii. 1, 2, 3.

‡ 1 Peter v. 8.

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Corinthian converts, who dwelt among unbelievers, he addresses them in alarm, and says, 'I fear for you ; I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.'" *

When Satan had declared to the woman 'Thou shalt not surely die,' he went on glibly and said, 'For God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.'†

And oh the pity of it, oh the sorrow and humiliation of the sequel! For the lie succeeded to the full. 'When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and she did eat, and gave also unto her husband, and he did eat.'

And on the instant the eyes of them both were indeed opened, to their shame, to know good and evil. From being innocent, and

* 2 Cor. xi. 3.

† Gen. iii. 5, 6, 7.

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wholly ignorant of evil, they became corrupt and averse from good.* And thence have we their descendants become corrupt throughout our generations. Inheriting their nature, we, too, are very far gone from that righteousness originally possessed by Adam.

Unless God Himself be with us by His Spirit, we set up our will against His, and without a remedy must have lived and died in our sins.

It was necessary for my purpose to lay all these circumstances distinctly before you ; for otherwise you could not well understand the measures that were taken in heaven to find a remedy for that fatal deed which brought death into the world and all our woe, with loss of Eden.

When Adam and Eve had tasted of the

* Rom. v. 14-19. See Article ix. of our Church, on Original or Birth-sin : 'It is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit, and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation.'

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forbidden fruit, God, whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good, saw what was done, and, speaking as a man, it grieved Him in His heart; and His justice repented that man had been made upon earth. And the Word of God, who was none other than the Son of God in the bosom of the Father from everlasting, saw it too; and it grieved Him also; and at once His love found out a remedy to save man's soul from death. Man having set up his own will against God's will, and so become amenable to the doom of disobedience, the Son of God rose up, as it were, and spoke: 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God, in Thy creatures' stead. Man deserves to be slain and to perish out of Thy sight; but I am willing to be slain, as a sacrifice and a substitute, to restore him to favour.'* And the gracious offer was accepted, and God's love to man returned; and He gave up His only begotten Son to be slain in due time. And thus it came to pass that in the counsels of heaven at the first creation of man, at the very foundation, so to speak, of the world,†

* Heb. x. 7.

† Besides the text, see also 1 Pet. i. 19, 20, where he says, that we were redeemed 'with the precious blood of

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the Lamb of God was appointed to be slain when the fulness of time should come.

Much of the tale has yet to be told ; much of sorrow to depress, but still more to elevate the heart in the first glad tidings of great joy from heaven. For the sentence had now to be passed on the guilty pair. And the Word went down to the garden to pronounce it ; and Adam and Eve, in their hiding-place of shame, were aware of His coming. In the sublime mystery of the felt approach of the invisible Presence, it is said : * ‘ They heard *The-voice-of-the-Lord-God* walking in the garden.’ And He drew near and called to Adam, and said, ‘ Where art thou ? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat ? ’ And the man said, ‘ The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.’ And the Lord God said unto the woman, in words which thrill the heart with their tenderness and pity, ‘ What is this that thou hast done ? ’ And the woman

Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot : Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for us.’

* Gen. iii. 8-20.

said, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.' And the Lord God said unto Satan's instrument, the serpent, then rising upright in his beauty, 'Because thou hast done this thing, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.'

And Satan fled out of his temporary covering from the precincts of the garden, and went forth as the prince of this world, up and down in his new dominions; and the wily serpent, his instrument, crept away into darkness, degraded.

And the Lord God gave sentence, also, on the woman; and on Adam too, and said, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'

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Behold, then, in this sentence on Satan and his victims, the goodness and the severity of God. Sinful man was to toil, and to suffer, and to die ; but in Christ, the Seed of the woman, was to be victorious and rise again ; while Satan was to triumph in a degree, and for a time, but in the end to be overcome by the woman's Seed, and to perish for ever. And so, with this promise to support him,* Adam was driven forth, with his wife, from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

All nature, animate and inanimate, was now changed ; and the air, not as before sweet and mild, but distempered with damp and cold, struck their unseasoned and suffering frames with anguish. And in compassion the Lord God put into their minds the making for themselves ' coats of skins ;'† and so covered them.

It is a question, simple as it appears at first sight, of the deepest interest and importance to the Bible student, How came they by these skins ? No flesh had yet died in the course of nature ;‡

* Gen. iii. 23.

† Gen. iii. 21.

‡ Gen. i. 29.

no animal food had been permitted ; and it seems unreasonable to suppose that any living creature should be killed for the sake of his coat alone. Take, then, the answer which has been wisely suggested—it is one which quite satisfies my mind, but, as it has no foundation in the letter of Scripture, I do not at all wish to enforce it on yours. It has been suggested that God revealed to Adam what had been done in heaven to atone for his sin, and for the sins of his descendants—namely, that the Lamb of God, His own dear Son, was to be slain in the fulness of time, then afar off. Meanwhile, the fact of that promise was to be kept alive through the long intervening period by a symbol to represent it. Without blood there was to be no remission of sins.* And men were to raise an Altar and to slay a lamb or other appointed animal, and to burn it thereon. And this act would show a conviction in the worshippers that themselves were, for their sins, deserving of death in like manner ; but that God, in consideration of that future sacrifice of His Son, would be conciliated and satisfied with the

* Heb. ix. 22. ‘Without shedding of blood is no remission.’ Lev. xvii. 12.

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symbol, if only offered in sincerity and truth. And thus it is surmised, in the skins of the animals slain by our first parents in sacrifice, were found coats to cover them.

To bring the present narrative to a conclusion. When Adam was driven out of Paradise to till the ground for his support, he had very many years to live. Had he not sinned, he—like those who will be alive when the last trumpet shall sound—would not have died at all; but he would have passed at once, after his allotted time, ‘by an easy and sweet transition from the typical joys of an earthly Paradise to the real and everlasting joys of a heavenly one.’ As it was, he had the sentence of death in him without the actual infliction at the instant of his disobedience, and lived on for many centuries,* reprieved. And sons were born to him, and they assisted him in the field—Cain a tiller of the ground, Abel a keeper of the sheep. And one of them was righteous, and the other unrighteous. One believed God, and was guided by His will: the other was unbelieving, and followed his own. And in

* Adam was 930 years old when he died. Gen. v. 5.

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process of time—I beg you specially to notice all that follows ; for while in the case of Adam I was unable to speak otherwise than with hesitating lips of his acts of worship, we can, I think, accept without a doubt the doctrine of atonement by means of a sacrifice of blood in the case of Abel his son. For, in process of time, it came to pass that * Cain brought ‘of the fruit of the ground’ an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought an offering ; but his, it is said, was ‘of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.’ And the result was that ‘the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering ; but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.’

Why was this ? Because, says the Apostle to the Hebrews, † Abel’s sacrifice was offered ‘in faith.’ God, we may well suppose, had told both the brethren of the promised Lamb to take away sin ; and had commanded that meanwhile they too must sacrifice a blood offering, that their sins might be forgiven. And of the two sons of Adam Abel alone believed God ; and it was counted unto him for righteousness. And so it is written : ‘By

* Gen. iv. 3, 4, 5.

† Heb. xi. 4.

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faith Abel offered unto God * more of a sacrifice than did Cain; more in accordance with God's will, and therefore more excellent than his brother's; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous in God's sight; God testifying of his gifts by sending down from heaven, in token of His approbation, fire to consume them.

By this event a lesson is taught us of peculiar significance. For, after saying that 'By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,' the Apostle adds, 'and by his faith he being dead yet speaketh.' His voice cometh up as it were from the realms of Paradise and says, 'Follow my faith; but look from the shadow to the substance. Look from me unto Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant,—unto Jesus the author and finisher of your faith. Look unto the Cross sprinkled with blood,† which speaketh better things than my poor offering on the Altar of God. For, my offering had regard to myself alone; but the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all Sin.'

* Heb. xi. 4. Πίστει πλείονα θυσίαν προσήνεγκε.

† Heb. xii. 24, ἅματι ῥαντισμοῦ κρείττον λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἀβελ.

II.

THE ALTAR OF NOAH AND OF ABRAHAM.

GENESIS viii. 20.

And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord.

It is a wide field to travel over from Eden to the Holy City where the Lamb of God was taken and slain. But, though the distance is great, we cannot well lose our way, for certain landmarks are set up here and there along the road, and the landmarks are Altars with the sacrifices burning. Abel and Noah, Abraham and Job, these sons of God stand prominently out from the rest of the ancient world, and, by their altar-worship and sacrifices of blood show the distinctive marks of faithful and obedient children of the Great Father of all.

My brethren, we, too, have a distinctive mark by which, if sincere, we show ourselves children of God and disciples of Christ. Eighteen hundred years ago the Lamb of God,

foreordained from the foundation of the world, was actually slain, and the Lord's Supper was instituted as a continual remembrance of that event,—that sacrifice of the death of Christ,—and of the benefits which it confers. And so in obedience to His command we come to the Lord's Table and there partake* spiritually of His most blessed Body and Blood. This act of ours is distinctive. This marks us out as good soldiers and servants of Christ, not ashamed of our profession. If we do not observe this, we may be good men in the eyes of the world; we may do many kind deeds; we may come to God's house. All this may be; and yet, if this is all, there is no open manifestation made by us since we were confirmed, that we are God's children and followers of His Son. But, if we stand boldly forth and hold public communion with Christ at His table, we own Him for our Lord indeed, and show forth His death till He come.†

It was exactly thus in the Church of old. With this difference, however: that whereas we

* 'Then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood.' Exhortation at the Communion.

† 1 Cor. xi. 26.

look back to the sacrifice which has been,—they looked forward to the sacrifice to come. I do not mean that Abel and the patriarchs who followed him had, all of them, their eyes opened evidently to see Christ slain in the distant future,—to see, by faith, the real sacrifice of which their altar-offerings were the type; but that, sacrificing in faith, they felt assured of the promised forgiveness of sin. This was their distinctive mark as ‘sons of God’ and followers of His will; while the mark of the ‘sons of men,’ who lived without God in the world, was disobedience to God’s will and adherence to their own.

To proceed with the narrative. When Abel had done what he was bidden—for he did it, says the Apostle, ‘by faith’—his sacrifice of blood was accepted. And when Cain saw that the Lord had respect unto his younger brother and to his offering, but that unto himself and to his offering He had not respect, he was very wroth, and his countenance fell.* And the Lord reasoned with him, and said, ‘If thou doest well in sacrificing as Abel has done

* Gen. iv. 5, 6, 7.

in atonement for sin, thou shalt be accepted, like him ; and his desire shall be unto thee, the elder, for this is thy birthright, and thou shalt rule over him. But, if thou doest not well, and offerest according to thine own will, and not according to Mine, sin, unatoned for, lieth at the door.'

But the Lord condescended in vain. For Satan, who was a murderer no less than a liar from the beginning,* put an evil thought into the heart of his spiritual child ; and on a certain day, when the two brothers were in the field talking, Cain rose up against Abel and slew him. 'Wherefore?' asks the Apostle ; † and then gives the answer : 'Because his own deeds were evil in offering after his own will ; and his brother's deeds were righteous in offering after God's will.' And Cain, after that first dreadful deed of murder, found the stings of conscience intolerable, ‡ and fled from the presence of the Lord. § He no longer even pro-

* John viii. 44. † 1 John iii. 12. ‡ Gen. iv. 13.

§ Gen. iv. 16. 'And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord : ' not from God's actual presence, which was impossible, but from standing before Him as His professed servant.

fessed to serve Him, but became a fugitive and vagabond unbeliever on the face of the earth. And his progeny, as might be expected, became men of violence like himself.

Meanwhile Adam had another son born to him, and he called him Seth, the substitute ; * for he was in the place of Abel whom Cain slew. And, like Abel, he was a child of God ; and in his time men owned themselves to be the Lord's, and declared themselves openly on His side.†

But alas, when the progeny of Cain, men famous in the world, began to multiply and daughters were born unto them, ‡ the sons of God saw that they were fair and made marriages with them at their will and so became unequally yoked together with unbelievers. And the fearful result quickly followed. All distinctive principle being now lost,—no difference being made between good and evil, between the righteous and the wicked, the world soon became universally corrupt and filled with violence.

And God saw it. § He saw that the wicked-

* Gen. v. 3.

† Gen. v. 26.

‡ Gen. vi. 1, 2.

§ Gen. vi. 5, 6.

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ness of man was great, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made him and it grieved Him at His heart, and He resolved to destroy man from off the face of the earth. And God sent a Flood to execute His will; and the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the flood-gates of heaven were opened.

But Noah was a just man and perfect, and walked with God, as an obedient son with his father. For a hundred and twenty years he had been occupied as directed by God in preparing an ark of safety. And during all that time being * a preacher of righteousness, he had warned and entreated his sinful brethren to turn and repent. And the Word who was afterwards made flesh came down from above, and worked with him, and preached, but all in vain, to that evil generation who are now in the dark prison of Hades.†

And the Lord shut Noah and his chosen companions into the ark.‡ And the Flood rose, and the ark was borne up with it

* 2 Pet. ii. 5.

† 1 Pet. iii. 19.

‡ Gen. vii. 16, 17, 18, 20, 21.

and rode tilting o'er the waves. And so it continued till all living creatures, all, in whose nostrils was the breath of life, all that was in the dry land had died. Then the waters gradually assuaged; and the Ark grounded; and Noah and all his company stept forth upon the dry land in safety.

It was a day of devoutest gratitude and humiliation. 'And Noah builded an Altar* unto the Lord;' and took of the firstlings born in the ark, of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the smell of the offering went up to heaven, a sweet savour unto the Lord.

GENESIS xxii. 9.

And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there.

IN the Altar of Noah was the second great land-mark in our journey to the Holy City where the Lamb of God was offered up. And we now move another stage forward.

* Gen. viii. 20, 21.

Centuries have intervened since the Flood. Again, the renewed world has multiplied and sinned ; and for its sins has been scattered abroad ;* and in the midst of this scene of idolatry and unbelief we come to the tents of Abraham who alone was found faithful,—among the faithless faithful only he.

God had specially called Abraham to His service ; and we linger among the tents and meditate and inquire what was the real object of his call ; and find that its sole great object was to teach mankind remission of man's sin by sacrifice and atonement. The Altar, symbolizing the Cross, was not one thing among others, but the paramount thing for the upholding of which he had been chosen and for which he had lived. And I am most anxious to draw your grave attention to that simple fact in the life of the most important character, as a mere mortal man, that ever existed upon earth.

After the Fall the Voice of the Lord said to Satan ‘ I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.’ This promise no doubt had been handed

* Gen. xi. 8.

down by word of mouth to Noah. But, as man's age since the Flood had been shortened there was danger, humanly speaking, of the promise dying out. It seemed good, therefore, to the Lord to secure its perpetuation by entrusting the great truth to a tried and faithful servant. And God looked down on Abram; and, in order to try him,* said 'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee;' promising on his obedience that He would make of him a great nation; and that He would bless him and make his name great; and that in him all families of the earth should be blessed. And Abram obeyed and went out.

And God tried him a second time† when he mourned at being childless. And God brought him forth abroad and said 'Look now toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them: so shall thy seed be.' And again Abram believed in the Lord; and the Lord counted it to him for righteousness.

And God tried Abraham once more, and it was the severest trial of all. For He commanded

* Gen. xii. 1.

† Gen. xv. 2, 5, 6.

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him to sacrifice his son, his only son Isaac.* And he prepared to obey; and then, the Patriarch having passed through all his trials, God repeated His promise in full, and swore by Himself that in blessing He would bless him and in multiplying He would multiply his seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and that his seed should possess the gate of his enemies; and finally that *in his Seed*†—(which Seed was Christ, says St. Paul‡—) *all the nations of the earth should be blessed*; because Abraham had obeyed His voice.

There is nothing so grand, nothing so momentous in history as these two promises to Abraham. They were neither of them temporal only or transitory promises. Both of them referred to the future sacrifice of the Lamb of God; both had regard to the original promise of the Seed of the woman which was to bruise Satan's head, and defeat his endeavour to crush mankind. Again I ask you, brethren, to direct your very earnest attention to this; for, it is really the sum of the whole Bible,—the great

* Gen. xxii. 1-19. † Heb. ii. 16. ‡ Gal. iii. 16.

object of all God's dealings with man since the fall.

God, you see, first promised Abraham that his progeny should so increase in numbers as to be countless as the stars or the sand, and should possess the gate of their enemies. That, of itself, would have been a glorious prospect, as men count glory. But, if mere material empire had been all, it would have ill agreed with the merciful designs of Him who is a Spirit and would have men worship Him in spirit, in order to dwell with Him hereafter in the world of spirits for ever.

Worldly rulers of the earth may extend their empire and have countless subjects abounding in wealth, and civilized and refined to the utmost. We ourselves may carry our language and freedom over a vast portion of the globe ; and all this may be worldly glorious. But, should it end there, and generation after generation pass away out of the world with little or no thought beyond, the object of man's existence upon earth would be defeated.

But, with the progeny of Abraham it was not to be so. Quite otherwise. A countless chosen seed were to be given him, as we shall

see, for an essentially spiritual purpose. And when his descendants received the law from Mount Sinai, and they built the Tabernacle, and afterwards the Temple, all they did was to have for its centre the Altar, with its sacrifice and atonement for sin. There was to be a large priesthood, indeed, and many peculiar but needful ceremonies, all pointing directly or indirectly, either to the great Sacrifice itself, or to the checking of intercourse with those who might divert them from it,—all, in fact, leading their first thoughts to the remission of sins by the shedding of blood.

It would have been a matter of great glory to Abraham to have been thus chosen by God to be the progenitor of His spiritual people who were thus ordained to carry on the symbol of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God until the time that He should be offered. But, that was not all. He had another exalted promise. He had the still higher glory of being the progenitor, humanly speaking, of Christ Himself. ‘To Abraham and his Seed,’ says the Apostle Paul, ‘were the promises made ; not to seeds,

as of many; but to thy Seed,* which is Christ.'

At the opening of the present lecture, we observed that whatever our private convictions may be, there is no authority from the letter of Scripture that all the early patriarchs, when they sacrificed on the Altar, thought of the Cross. But, in the case of Abraham, there is no doubt whatever; and there are few passages in the Bible more interesting and important than those which speak of it in clear words which cannot be evaded.

'Your father Abraham,' said our Lord to the Jews around Him, 'rejoiced to see My† day'—the day of My death and of My resurrection; the day when in Me his Seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed—'and he saw it, and was glad.'

You will not object to hear again—you cannot hear it too often—how, nearly nineteen hundred years before the event, Abraham was

* Gal. iii. 16. And so Heb. ii. 16. Jesus 'took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.'

† John viii. 56.

made, as it were, an eye-witness of the fulfilment of the glorious promise, through him, of the death and resurrection of Christ; a sight which, after all his severe trials, must indeed have gladdened and fully satisfied his soul.

When Abraham left Beersheba to offer up Isaac his son, he stopped on the third morning in sight* of the appointed place, which was Mount Moriah. And having directed his two young men, who had the care of the laden ass, to wait on the road till he returned from sacrificing, he proceeded with Isaac to the mount, 'and he built an altar there.'

* Gen. xxii. 'Then on the third day Abraham *lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off*.' These expressions, not uncommon in the Bible, need not disturb the plain facts of the narrative, as if Abraham raised his eyes to the summit of a high mountain many miles off. *To lift up the eyes* is simply to look intently, sometimes with emotion, on any object; and *afar off*, means at some distance from the beholder, according to the circumstances of the case. One example will suffice: Job's three friends crossed the threshold of the enclosure in which he sat down among the ashes, and there stood transfixed with grief: he was so changed by his disease that they did not know him. 'And when *they lifted up their eyes afar off*, and knew him not, they lifted up their voices and wept.'—Job ii. 12.

The Altar of Noah and Abraham. 35

You well understand that the special characteristic of Abraham was his unwavering faith. He believed every word which God told him. He was told, when it appeared hopeless and impossible, that he should have a child, and through that child alone all the families of the earth, as God had promised, should be blessed. And now Isaac, that very child, was ordered by God to be slain as a sacrifice. And Abraham was ready to obey; and he laid Isaac on the altar. But here was the depth of his trial and of his faith. If he slew him, and Isaac died from off the face of the earth, what Abraham had believed before of the promised blessing would have come to nothing. This he felt, and his only resource, therefore, was still to believe on, and to be assured in his heart that, after being slain and offered up as a sacrifice, Isaac, his son, would come to life again.

And so, figuratively, it came to pass. The iron had already entered into the father's soul. He had tasted the bitterness of his son's death. The fatal blow was all but struck; when, lo, a voice from heaven arrested his hand, and brought back, as it were, Isaac from the dead. For, thus comments the apostle: 'By faith,

36 The Altar of Noah and Abraham.

Abraham, when he was tried,* offered up Isaac ; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called ; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence also he figuratively received him.'

There, then, was the reward of Abraham's faith—a clear typical representation before his eyes of the promised universal blessing to come through Christ, his Seed. It would have been nothing to him simply to foresee Christ come in the flesh. It would have been nothing even to see Him die on the cross. For, if Christ were not to rise from the dead, man would not be blessed:† he would be yet in his sins. But when, in a figure, he saw Him not only die, but rise again for our justification, it was everything, and the blessing was complete. 'He rejoiced to see Christ's perfect day, and he saw it and was glad.'

* Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19.

† 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17. 'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.' 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins.'

After this, whatever light he might have had on the subject before, there could not be a shadow of doubt on his mind now, as to the ulterior object of sacrifice—that, while it atoned for sin, it referred to Christ. And so, in the clearest assurance of faith, Abraham took the ram which he saw caught in the thicket by his horns, and offered him up on the altar in the stead of his son, and then went to his young men who were tarrying for him.

Just one word more, in conclusion, about Abraham's joy and gladness. When a sensible man has valued life at its just worth, he finds, after all, that the greatest happiness in the world is the inward feeling of forgiveness in the sight of God—of the removal of that doom of sin which would make eternity intolerable.

This was the happiness of Abraham in looking forward to the Gospel of Christ, which secures that forgiveness, and does away that doom, and opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

And blessed, thrice blessed, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* who hath

* 1 Pet. i. 3, 6, 7, 8.

begotten us again, my brethren, to the same lively hope. Well may we rejoice in it, though now for a season we may be in heaviness through the manifold pains and weaknesses and sorrows of life, which are sent to try us. Let us look on all such things as indeed sent in mercy to try our faith, and to conduce to our praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 'whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

III.

THE ALTAR OF JOB.

JOB xlii. 8.

‘Take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams and go to My servant Job and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept.’

WHEN the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men, He held converse on a certain occasion with the unbelieving Jews on the subject of Abraham, who had been dead for more than eighteen hundred years. Seeing their opposition to Himself, He drew a comparison between their feeling and that of their progenitor, whom they pretended so greatly to regard, and said, ‘Your father Abraham * rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad.’ Then said the Jews unto Him, ‘Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen

* John viii. 56, 57, 58, 59.

Abraham?' Jesus said unto them, 'Before Abraham was, I am;' I, that is, existed before his time, even from everlasting; as God existed under the title, I am.

Then took they up stones to cast at Him; but it was a certain truth, notwithstanding. For, says St. John,* unhesitatingly, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.' 'And the Word was made flesh,† and dwelt among us.'

I had better observe, in passing, that the most probable reason why the Son of God, who, as God, was then a disembodied Spirit, was called The Word, was this: we make the meaning of our inward thoughts and wishes known to others by the word of our mouth; and so God made His intention and will effective through His Son, who is therefore called the Word. 'He spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.'

And the patriarch Job speaks with equal

* John i. 1, 2, 3.

† John i. 14.

assurance of the existence of the Son of God from everlasting. Job had been almost overborne by the unjust condemnation of his friends, and he appealed to the living Redeemer, then in the bosom of His Father, to vindicate his integrity. 'I know,' he says,* in substance, 'that my Redeemer liveth at this moment, and is alive from everlasting. I know, moreover, that in the latter days He shall stand in the flesh upon earth, and redeem me from my sins with His blood. I know, too,' he implies, 'that I shall rise, like Him, from the dead. And though, after worms have destroyed my skin, they will destroy every particle of my flesh, yet I am assured of this, that when I rise in my glorified body I shall see God my Saviour with my own eyes, and be judged in righteousness and vindicated by Him.'

Having this knowledge and assurance, it is no wonder that Job, as a child of God, was, like Abel and the righteous ones who followed him, obedient to his Father's will. He knew that, in order to be redeemed at the last, a man must seek atonement for his sins at the altar ;

* Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

that, as a symbol of the Redeemer's sacrifice in the latter days, satisfaction must be made by the shedding of blood. And how the patriarch of Uz obeyed that will, and what were the results of that obedience, I proceed to consider in detail.

Leaving the tents of Abraham, passing through a weary wilderness of idolatry and unbelief, we come to a bright green spot, and find it a second Paradise. Within it stands conspicuous the family altar, and the distinctive sacrifices of the sons of God are continually burning. And God the Father is pleased thereat, and has evidently blessed the spot, and made a hedge about its possessor, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side.

It was the city and territory of Job ; and around the city were the houses and possessions of his seven sons.* And Job was a perfect man and upright, and one that feared God and abhorred what was evil. He was a man of great wealth and charity withal, so as to be the most powerful and most generous of the men

* Job i. 1, 2.

of the East. ‘When the ear heard him,* then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him, because he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.’ ‘He put on righteousness, and it clothed him; his judgment was as a robe and a diadem.’

The piety that united his large family—the love which his children bore to each other—the intercourse kept up between the houses, form a picture of domestic happiness unexampled in the records of Holy Writ. Among other occasions of social enjoyment, it is said that they interchanged birthday festivals, when each of the brothers, as the day came round, sent and called for his three sisters, who lived at home with their parents, to eat and drink with them.

And it was so that when each day of feasting was over that holy patriarch, in his paternal anxiety for their welfare, sent for his sons, and, after due preparation, collected them early in the morning around the family altar. There was the secret of their unbroken union and happiness; a continual remembrance of their

* Job xxix. 11, 12, 13, 14.

own demerits, and of the boundless goodness of their Heavenly Father. And Job offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all, for, he said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned unwittingly, and in their moments of hilarity have spoken lightly of God in their hearts.' Thus did Job continually as the several seasons came round.*

I have called this happy region a second paradise ; and so it was, in a certain sense, for it was a scene of trial as well as of infinite enjoyment ; and the instrument of trial, as in Eden, was Satan himself. The evil spirit had shown himself, first of all, to Eve as a liar and the father of lies ; then to Cain as a murderer ; and now he resumes the character which he displayed in heaven as the great adversary or accuser.† Thrust out of Eden at the Fall, which he had accomplished, he had since been permitted to roam about the world burning with a desire to destroy ; and now we find him here. For, after one of those stated days of worship, when the sons of God upon earth‡—

* Job i. 4, 5.

† Rev. xii. 10.

‡ The ordinary interpretation is, that Satan, who for his

the righteous Job and his family—came together to make their usual offering of sacrifice unto the Lord,* Satan came also, invisible, among them, to find some occasion, if it might be, to accuse Job concerning his God. But he found none, and the last resource of malevolence was a base imputation of motives within.

And the Lord saw him returning, and said unto him, ‘Whence comest thou?’ And Satan replied, ‘From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it.’ The very thing he did in St. Peter’s days—the very thing he is doing now—seeking for victims; and therefore it is that we are urgently warned to be ever on our guard, and to resist him, stedfast in the faith, when he will flee, discomfited.

And the Lord said unto Satan, ‘Hast thou in

sin had been cast out of heaven, returned thither, and mingled with the holy angels in their occasional worship. But to me it is inconceivable that the evil spirit could have gone back to heaven, into which nothing evil can enter, and to have mingled in that worship, which is not occasional, but never ceasing day or night. By the sons of God, here, I understand His righteous sons, born of Adam. By the sons of God, in Job v., I understand the angels of heaven, not born, but created of God.

* Job i. 6-12.

thy scrutiny well considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, and one that feareth God and abhorreth evil?' Then Satan answered, insinuating, 'Doth Job fear God for nought?—Thou hast so blest him in his house, and in the work of his hands, and the increase of his substance, that his fear of Thee may prove after all but a refined and deep-hidden regard for himself. But, put forth Thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.' And the Lord said unto Satan, 'Behold all that he hath is in thy power: only upon himself, personally, put not forth thine hand.'

All that Job had was then doomed.* Now it so happened that the birthday feast was then going on in the eldest brother's house, and all Job's children were present. And messengers came quickly, one after the other, to Job and reported, first, that his ploughing cattle were all seized and his ploughmen slain. Then, that the sheep and the shepherds were blasted with lightning. After that, that his camels were

* Job i. 13 to end of chapter.

carried off and the servants killed. Last of all came the heavy tidings that a great wind from the wilderness had struck the four corners of the eldest son's house and it had fallen; and all within, in the very midst of their feasting,—his seven sons and three daughters,—all had been buried in the ruins.

Then it was that Job arose and rent his mantle and fell down upon the ground and worshipped. Then it was, and not before, that the voice of the parent spoke, but with patient lips—for he had worshipped and his prayers had gone up with power—‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.’

But Satan, baffled, had other arrows yet, dipped in poison, and he aimed again at his victim. For again there was a day when the sons of God upon earth, now reduced to Job and his diminished household, came to present themselves before the Lord at His altar; and Satan came also, unseen, among them.*

And the Lord beheld Satan returning and said unto him ‘From whence comest thou?’

* Job ii. 1–11.

And he answered as before. And the Lord knew that in his going to and fro Satan had been with Job, and He said unto him, 'Hast thou this second time well considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth? As thou seest, he still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou didst move Me to destroy him without cause.' And Satan replied, 'Skin after skin,—peel him, as it were, of one possession after another,—strip him till he is bare,—yea all that a man hath will a man give to save his flesh. But, touch his flesh and his bone, and the torture of his body and the anguish of his soul, will make him curse Thee to Thy face.' And the Lord said unto Satan, 'Behold, he is in thine hand : only save his life.'

And Satan did what he was permitted, to the utmost, and smote Job with the most terrible disease ever felt by man, covering his body all over with sore and deep-seated irritating boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. So intolerable was it that he took him a sharp potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then it was that his wife, weaker in body and still weaker in faith than her husband, prompted doubtless by Satan

to fulfil his prophecy and carry out his design, said unto him ‘Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die.’ ‘What?’—he replied and reproved her folly,—‘shall we who have hitherto felt nothing but mercy, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’

In all this Job sinned not with his lips; and Satan it would seem was discomfited.

But Satan had one weapon still, more deadly than the others, and with it he struck a blow which was well-nigh fatal. For, three friends of eminent rank and great piety came to visit Job and comfort him in his anguish.* The account of their approach to him is fearful and mysterious in the highest degree. So changed was he by his disease, that when they lifted up their eyes to him afar off, they knew him not. And they cried aloud at the sight, and wept, and tore their mantles, and sprinkled dust in the air upon their heads, for grief. And they sat down by him on the ground, and said not a word. Not a word for seven awful days and seven nights, and still not a word.†

* Job ii. 11, 12, 13.

† Job iii.

At last in his agony of body and soul the sufferer could bear the silence no longer, but broke out into cursings on his birth, and into longings for death, and cried, 'Let the day perish wherein I was born!'

His friends were horror-struck. It was their creed—sincere but mistaken, and in this instance cruelly unjust—that the wicked only are afflicted and the righteous spared. And they addressed him, one after the other, accordingly; and hardened doubtless by the instigation of Satan, told him that his supposed goodness all along had been only hypocrisy, and they called on him to confess and repent. And how Job replied, and they rejoined, and both sides by degrees became angry; and how the friends spoke as if they were God's representatives to approve or condemn; and how Job irritated and provoked to go beyond his actual belief, spoke as if he were pure as the angels in heaven, and was unjustly afflicted,—all this to consider would take us too far away from the point to which we tend.

I can only add that at the end of the controversy a new character* comes in, youthful,

* Elihu (Job xxxii.)

but modest and approved of God. He had noticed with sorrow the self-laudation of Job, and marked with disapprobation the ill-timed hardness of his three friends; and with becoming freedom recalls each of them from themselves to God,—to Him who is the only Judge of what is right, and in whose sight the best men and even angels are unholy.

Job, however, was still unsubdued; and the Lord Himself* addressed him out of the whirlwind, and said ‘Gird up now thy loins like a man, and answer thou me: Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth, when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God in heaven shouted for joy? He that contendeth with the Almighty, can he instruct such a Being as that? He that reproveth God the Maker of all things, let him answer it!’

Then Job, softened and subdued by the Voice from heaven,† replied: ‘Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth and proceed no farther.’

* Job xxxviii.

† Job xl. 3, 4, 5.

And the Lord answered him again * out of the whirlwind and said, ‘I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me. Wilt thou disannul My judgment? Wilt thou condemn Me thy Maker, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath and behold every one that is proud and abase him. Look on every one that is proud and bring him low, and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together and cover their faces. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee!’

Then Job answered the Lord† and said, ‘I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. I have uttered that which I understood not. I have heard of Thee hitherto, faintly, by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee evidently before me. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.’

* Job xl. 6-15.

† Job xlii. 1-7.

Such was the trial of this highly favoured son of God. Humanly speaking, he had one only fault, and that being corrected by suffering and the deepest self-abasement, he was exalted* by his Heavenly Father to a higher degree of happiness and glory than he had ever attained before.

As for his three friends who came to mourn with him, and who with their contracted views of God's dealings with man, and their hard and unauthorised imputations upon himself, almost drove him to desperation, there was mercy found also for them.† At God's special command, they made atonement for their evil surmises by an ample sacrifice of blood; and as they stood at the smoking altar one stood by them with hands uplifted to heaven, and they looked on him with redoubled reverence and affection. It was the holy patriarch himself; for God had said to them, 'My servant Job shall pray for you,† for him will I accept;' and as a type of the great Mediator to come, he interceded for them, and they were forgiven.

* Job xlii. 10-12.

† Job xlii. 7-10.

We cannot part with the Patriarch and his family without trying to catch some of their spirit. It tells us a great secret,—the secret of family happiness. Father and mother, brothers and sisters, how good and joyful a thing it is for them to dwell together in unity! But, mere natural affection—sweet as it is—will not of itself produce it. A slight invasion of a fancied right, a word, a look, will too often effectually disturb it. But, let each member learn the self-denying truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Let him love others, as he dearly loves himself. Let him think of the better home above when this has passed away,—that home where all is love, and where nothing but love can enter; and every unloving emotion will vanish. Let the picture be complete by the parents' constant prayer in the midst of his offspring,—that the Fatherly hand may ever be over them, that the Holy Spirit may ever be with them, and the wished-for blessing will surely come.

But, Sorrow perhaps crosses the threshold. Losses, difficulties, distresses enter in. Sickness pales the face and weakens the limbs; and the long-dreaded or sudden bereavement

follows. The believer, however, like the patriarch, bears up with courage. Some natural tears he drops, but wipes them soon; and when tempted to despond he replies: ‘What? shall we receive, as we have hitherto done, only good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!’

One blessed secret has yet to be unfolded. A man sins—and what man is he that sinneth not? He has done wrong, perhaps, in many ways. He has thought and spoken harshly of others, like the friends of Job. But, at last he comes to himself. He kneels down in secret by his bedside. He supplicates aloud with his household. He joins heartily in prayer with the congregation; and he trusts, with a most hopeful trust, that he is forgiven through Christ, his Redeemer. But when he thinks of the last scene on Mount Olivet, and follows the Redeemer as He goes up into heaven; and there, by faith, sees Him sitting, as his Intercessor, at the right hand of God, he can have no doubt whatever of a blessed result. For, it is no visionary feeling that such, or such-like, are the

gracious words of Intercession : ‘ Father, forgive him, for he repents ! By My agony and bloody sweat ; by My Cross and Passion ; by My death and burial ; by My resurrection and ascension,—in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, I beseech Thee, Holy Father, deliver and save him ! ’

IV.

THE BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER.

EXODUS xii. 13.

‘And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you.’

WHEN the sons of Jacob, who was called Israel, sold their brother Joseph for a slave, and he was taken down into Egypt, they little thought what they had done. They little thought that they were helping on the designs of Providence for his good. For, his truth and integrity were such that he became a great man there, and master of all that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had.* And in the famine which drove his brothers into Egypt to buy food he was able to supply their need; but in the meanwhile he had become so changed that they did not know him. He knew them, however, and his heart yearned towards them; and he made himself known

* Genesis xxxix. to l.

to them, and overwhelmed them with confusion by his kindness, and wept aloud with affection, and kissed them, and forgave them. ‘And now,’ he said, ‘be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life.’

Yes; and Joseph himself little knew the extent and deep meaning of his own words. For it was not merely his brothers’ lives, and the life of his father Jacob, who was Israel, and whom he sent for at once, but the whole stock of Abraham, the very root of the Church of God, the Israelites,—all were preserved by Joseph’s presence in Egypt at that time. Joseph was there to carry out the designs of God when He promised Abraham that his progeny should be countless, and that in his Seed—which was Christ—all nations of the earth should be blessed.

Nor only so, but, to keep to events nearer at hand,—he was there to fulfil the details of the prophecy delivered to Abraham when he was in a deep sleep, when an horror of great darkness fell upon him. ‘Know of a surety,’ said the Lord, ‘that thy seed shall be a stranger

in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them. And they shall afflict them* four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterward they shall come out with great substance.'

And the close enquirer will find that that prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. And I have now to tell you in my present Lecture, in what manner and by what means it was fulfilled. This will bring me to the last red landmark,—before the building of the Tabernacle and of the Temple,—which points to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

When Jacob and all the progeny of Abraham through Isaac, had come down to Egypt, they were treated at the outset, for Joseph's sake, with the greatest consideration and kindness. But, in process of time, a new king arose who knew not Joseph; and the afflictions of the Israelites began in earnest. And for many years they suffered all the horrors of the most cruel bondage. The common results of per-

* Genesis xv. 14.

secution followed ; for, the more they were persecuted* the more they strove and the more they multiplied in numbers and in strength. At length the Pharaoh of the time became alarmed ; and alarm made him hard-hearted ; and to keep his bondsmen under, orders were issued, and the male infants of the Hebrews were cast out to perish in the Nile.†

During this period of inhuman cruelty it so happened on a certain day that Pharaoh's daughter‡ came down to the river's side with her attendants ; and lo among the flags a fair infant in its tiny float of bulrushes. And it was drawn out of the water, and the babe wept, and it went to the heart of the princess. And she sent it to one of the Hebrew women—its own mother—to be nourished. And after that it was brought to her own royal home, and became unto her as a son.

It was Moses, the Levites' child ;§ who thus grew up learned in all the wisdom|| of the Egyptians, and providentially qualified for the high office he was to hold. But, through his parents the Levites' means, he was nourished

* Exodus i. 12. † Exodus i. 22. ‡ Exodus ii. 5-11.

§ Exodus ii. 1.

|| Acts vii. 22.

privately with healthier learning than that of his masters. And when he was come to years,* he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,—to bear the reproach† of one looking for the promised Seed, which seed was Christ, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. By faith he set at nought the anger of the king, and stood up bravely for an injured brother,‡ and struck a fatal blow which sent him a fugitive into the land of Midian;§ and there for forty years he lived in secret as a shepherd.

For forty years he had dwelt in the palace of Pharaoh; and now for another forty years he served Jethro the father of his wife. After that he received from God his momentous commission from the midst of the burning bush.|| And the Lord said unto him, ‘I have seen the affliction, I have heard the cry of My people, and I am come down to deliver them. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee to bring

* Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26, 27.

† Heb. xi. 26: ‘Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.’

‡ Ex. ii. 11.

§ Ex. ii. 15, 21.

|| Ex. iii. 2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15.

them forth out of Egypt.' And Moses said, 'who am I, Lord, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?' And He said, 'Certainly I will be with thee;' and added, as a sure token of His having sent him, that when he had brought the people out, they should serve God upon the mountain by which they stood,—Mount Horeb. 'And tell them My name, which is I AM THAT I AM; and say that I AM hath sent thee unto them;' I who am the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

And when Moses still hesitated,* the Lord worked two miracles before him, and promised that he also himself should have power to work miracles before Pharaoh, and his own people.

'But I am not eloquent,' said Moses, 'neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue.' And the Lord answered, 'Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.'

* Ex. iv. 1-18.

And the Lord was angry when Moses persevered; but found a way for him to escape, and pointed to Aaron his brother. ‘I know,’ said He, ‘that Aaron can speak well. And behold he cometh out * to meet thee with a glad heart. And now thou shalt put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand wherewith thou shalt do wonders.’

And lo Aaron by God’s direction came out, as He said, to meet Moses in the mount of God; and Aaron kissed him, and they consulted together, and went back to the children of Israel in Egypt; and Aaron the spokesman addressed them as he was commanded. And when the people heard the commission from Jehovah, and saw the signs which were done before them, they rejoiced, and bowed their heads and worshipped.

But Pharaoh, the king, took no heed † to

* Ex. iv. 27-31. † Ex. v. 2.

Moses and to Aaron, or to the unknown God by whom they were sent; and in spite of the threats they uttered and the wonders they displayed, refused to let the people go. Miracle followed miracle, and his hard heart was still unmoved. At last his hour arrived and his cup was full. And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Yet one more sign, yet one more plague will I bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt, and after that be sure he will gladly let you go; nay, he shall even thrust you out hence altogether.'

The one plague more * was death to all the first-born in Egypt; to the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, to the first-born of the maid-servant that sat behind the mill; and to all the first-born of the cattle.

And it came to pass that very night, at midnight, that Pharaoh rose, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

Meanwhile, against any of the children of Israel, there was not a dog that moved his

* Ex. xi. 1; xii. 29, 30.

tongue.* Not a creature was touched; for all their houses had the distinctive mark of the sacrifice of blood. They had done what they were bidden, and had sacrificed to the Lord. They had atoned for their sin and were safe. And this was the manner of the atonement:† Their numbers were so great that they could not have separate altars. So each man took his lamb—a lamb for a certain number in each house—and killed it. He then took a bunch of hyssop, and dipped it in the blood which was in the bason, and struck the side-posts and the lintels of his house with the blood, and moved not from his house till the morning. And when the terrible midnight came, the Lord saw the blood, and passed over them when He smote the Egyptian first-born with death.

Such was the first Passover,—a type, and a memorial. The blood of that lamb sprinkled on the door-posts of the children of God, was a clear type of the atoning blood sprinkled on the conscience by faith. It was a type of the Lamb of God slain to save us from death. It was a type of the sacrifice of the death of

* Ex. xi. 7.

† Ex. xii. 21, 22, 23, 28.

Christ. And, brethren, let us never forget the blessed and true fact which it represented. As the season comes round, let us with the Apostle take up the joyous hymn,—‘Christ our passover is sacrificed * for us,—therefore let us keep the feast; not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more: Death hath no more dominion over Him. For, in that He died, He died unto sin once; but, in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.’ And if we are true men, let us never forget the solemn injunction which follows: ‘Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

The Passover, too, was to be kept as a memorial † by the Hebrews, so long as they existed as a nation,—a memorial of their delivery from death, and from bondage worse than death. And they killed the Passover in the evening, and dressed it, and ate it in haste.‡ They ate it—with their loins girded, their shoes on their

* 1 Cor. v. 7; Rom. vi. 9.

† Ex. xii. 24, 25, 26, 27.

‡ Ex. xii. 11, 28.

feet, and their staff in their hand, in readiness to move on the instant. They ate it in haste: it was the Lord's Passover. For, no sooner had the Lord passed over them on that fatal midnight, than they went out of Egypt, unopposed. The Egyptians in truth were terror-stricken, as they well might be,* and actually thrust them forth, laden with gifts, and their proud king fell down before them, and entreated them, as they were going, to bless him.

So the triumphant Israelites went out of Egypt with a high hand, and in well-ordered ranks, an exceeding great army of † 600,000 footmen alone. And they came designedly out of the straight path to the shores of the Red Sea. And the Lord God Himself led them about ‡ through the way of the wilderness, and guided them with a pillar of a cloud by day, and with a pillar of fire by night.

Meanwhile the terrified Egyptians had roused themselves, and repented that they had given way.§ They thought in their cunning that the

* Ex. xii. 31, 32, 33, 35, 36.

† Ex. xii. 37.

‡ Ex. xiii. 18.

§ Ex. xiv. 5 to 10.

fugitives were entangled in the land, and shut in by the wilderness. And they followed them in haste with all the armies of Egypt. They left none behind; for it was the Lord's design that all of them should perish for their cruelty to His people; and that the world should see by a terrible example that there is a God that judgeth the earth.

And they followed fast on the Israelites to their own destruction, and overtook them at the borders of the sea. And the Lord said to Moses,—‘ Bid the children of Israel now go forward. And lift thou up thy rod,* and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and they shall go on dry land in the midst of the sea.’ And Moses did so, and they crossed over the solid bed of the sea, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left, and they passed safely through. And the Egyptians, madly following, went in after them. And when the last Egyptian horseman had entered in, then at the Lord's command Moses again stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the superincumbent waters returned

* Ex. xiv. 15, 16 to 31.

to their strength, and curled over and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh, and there remained not so much as one of them alive.

And when Israel, on the opposite side, saw the Egyptians dead and cast forth on the sea-shore, a song of exultation * burst forth from the lips of Moses, accompanied by the people,

I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously :

The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea !

And Miriam, the sister of Aaron, came forth with the women, with timbrels and with dances ; and she took up the strain and said,

Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously :

The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea !

Thus, freed from their enemies, the Israelites, under the guidance of Moses, went forward † on their journey towards the promised land. And what occurred to them by the way to Horeb ; how they murmured in their difficulties

* Ex. xv. 1, 20, 21.

† Ex. xv. 22 and three following chapters.

and privations; and Moses gave them bread from heaven and water from the dry rock; how they fought with Amalek; how Jethro came to visit and advise him, I cannot stay now to narrate.* But when the people arrived at the wild plain around Sinai, and there encamped for a long season at the foot of the mount of God, events occurred of such paramount importance and grandeur that I must beg your earnest attention to the details. To one thing especially I must point as the grand object of this whole course of Lectures,—the sum and substance of God's revelation to man,—the atonement of sin by the sacrifice of blood.

On his arrival at the foot of Horeb, Moses called to mind the token which God gave him in Midian, that he was commissioned by Him: 'When,' said He, 'thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this very mountain,—Mount Horeb.' And now here Moses had arrived with the people; and he went up into the mount to serve the Lord and do His bidding. And God spoke to him

* Ex. xix.

† xix. 3-20.

there, and bade him go down to his people, and offer them the Lord's covenant. He was to tell them that it was the Lord who had borne them on eagles' wings in their flight out of Egypt; and to assure them that if they would accept His covenant and keep it, they should be His peculiar treasure above all people—a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.

And when Moses went down to the people, and they heard the terms of the covenant, they accepted them to the full and answered together with one voice, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.'

Very wonderful was this converse of God with Moses. He went back to God upon the mount; and God spoke to him out of the thick cloud; and the people heard the words, and believed in Moses ever afterwards; for they knew what he reported was true.

Then, on the third day, when the people were duly sanctified, God engaged to come down from heaven in the sight of all Israel, when the cloud of His Presence should rest on the summit of Mount Sinai. Meanwhile at the foot of the mount bounds were to be set to

keep off the people and the cattle, at the peril of their lives if they broke through.

And the Lord God very awfully fulfilled His promise. For, it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the foot of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.*

Such were the preparations for the giving of the Law. They were awful and impressive in

* Ex. xix. 20.

the extreme; and were doubtless fitted precisely for a nation of captives just liberated, but hardened by the pressure of a long and miserable bondage.

We cannot but think, while we read, of the milder voice of the Gospel of Christ, which speaks in such tender tones of pity and forgiveness. We cannot but think, and compare; and in doing so find our thoughts put into words by an Apostle of the Gospel, in his letter to the Hebrews.

He is writing to the descendants of these very Israelites, and points to this awful transaction on Mount Sinai; and bids them mark the difference between the giving of the Covenant which had passed away, and of that which took its place. They had been taught the Law, and had learnt its meaning: that it was but elementary; that it was, as it were, only the schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. And they had come; and were Christians like ourselves.

And now, in order to encourage them to perseverance, the Apostle bids them reflect and compare. ‘Ye are not now* come’ (he says

* Ep. Heb. xii. 18-25.

in substance) 'like your ancestors of old, to the material mountain of Sinai on which God descended,—which burned with fire and which none could touch but on pain of death. Nor are ye come unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words,—which voice was so appalling as to be intolerable. But, ye are come to Mount Sion,—to the spiritual city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, in a word to the Church of Christ,—and to bands of ministering angels which encompass the believer,—to communion with the living saints wherever they may be; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of the just in Paradise, whose work upon earth is accomplished; and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant; and to the sprinkling of Christ's blood upon the conscience, which speaketh better than Abel spoke. For, though by his faith in the first typical sacrifice on the Altar, Abel being dead yet speaketh, and speaketh well; still the actual sacrifice on the Cross speaketh better; for, it declares plainly that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.'

See then,* my brethren, that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For though to the penitent believer He is most merciful and most gracious, yet to the impenitent and unbelieving our God is a consuming fire.

* Ep. Heb. xii. 25, 29.

V.

THE ALTAR OF THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS xxvi. 30.

‘Thou shalt rear up the Tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the Mount.’

A FEW words which fell from the lips of one who lay upon his last bed of sickness made a deep impression on me a long while ago; and, in connection with the subject on which we are engaged, they have come back to my mind with great solemnity. The sufferer was an excellent man, and it surprised me at the time to read the report of almost his last utterance; for, he said ‘If I lose sight of the Cross but for a moment, I am ready to despair.’

And yet it ought not to have excited any wonder. For, when even the holiest believer thinks of his remaining infirmities, and of the unapproachable purity of God,—how He charges even His angels with folly;* when he thinks

* Job iv. 18.

of the uncertainty of life and the nearness of eternity, he requires that abiding view of expiation to encourage him and hold him up.

This is the reason why every true Church of God keeps the Cross of Christ and the Atonement He made on it ever before the eye. With us of the Church of England it is the one great distinctive doctrine. It is taught to the young as soon as they are able to learn; and they almost lisp the Gospel assurance of the precious ‘sacrifice* of the death of Christ.’ All through life we are invited and urged by a certain repeated act of devotion, always to keep in remembrance that ‘meritorious Cross and Passion,† whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven.’

Such is the important article which tests a Church, whether it be a standing or a falling Church. And when I go on with my narrative

* Catechism. The Lord’s Supper was ordained ‘for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ.’

† Exhortation to the Holy Communion.

and tell you that the Atonement was the life of the Church in the wilderness,—that in the worship of the Tabernacle and the Temple it was the great point around which all their services turned, you may be surprised, but it is not the less true. And I hope to be able, with God's help and the authority of His word, to prove it, and make it as plain to you, my brethren, as it is to myself.

If you remember, we left Moses complying with the summons of God and going up into Mount Sinai to receive his appointed commission. He took with him two plain Tablets of Stone, and placed them before the Lord; and the Lord had but to will it,* and the written commandments were. And the Lord communed with Moses a long while, and told him all His will relating to His people. And at the end of forty days and forty nights, Moses again descended from the Mount, holding in his hands the two tables of stone inscribed with the ten commandments by the finger of God Himself. And when he came down his face shot forth rays and glistened with Divinity; and calming

* Ex. xxxii. 17.

the terrors of the light with a veil,* he gave the people in commandment all that the Lord had spoken.

I have passed over the fearful occurrence of the first falling off of the people, together with Aaron, from their allegiance to God; I have omitted the breaking of the first two Tables, when God and His servant Moses were indignant at their idolatry; and now speak of the second giving of the Law which was similar to the first.†

Nor will the limits of my narrative allow me to go at all into the various other laws given by God for His people's good. My text recalls me to the special subject for our examination to day,—which is,—the building, and the form, and the annual great distinctive service of the Tabernacle of Moses.

The promised covenant had now been completed between God and the seed of Abraham,—the twelve tribes of Israel. God henceforth was to be their accepted and only King. The Testimony to the truth of the Covenant on

* Ex. xxxiv. 35.

† Ex. xxxiv. 1-4.

God's part, was the Word given and attested by the finger of God Almighty, on the two tables of stone. All they had to do was to fulfil their part of the Covenant, and in addition to build for their King a fitting House for Him to dwell in. For, in the Mount, God had given Moses the pattern* to build it by, impressing the fashion of it on his mind's eye, and keeping it throughout clear and distinct in all its details.

And Moses at once summoned the people to the work.† And they gladly offered themselves. With willing hearts they offered gold and silver and brass,—jewels and bracelets and divers ornaments; and needlework of the richest material and most varied colours. For, when they were thrust out of Egypt they demanded of the Egyptians their due for services so long unpaid; and the terror-stricken tyrants forced on them their treasures, as much as they could bear. And now they had abundance to offer for the House of God. And the men worked and the women wove. And Bezaleel and Aholiab were filled with the

* Ex. xxxix. 32.

† Ex. xxxv.—xxxix.

Spirit of God to work cunningly in metal work, and in stone, and in all manner of devices for the service of the sanctuary. And the people brought more offerings than enough, and had to be restrained. And so the work prospered, and the building was accomplished rapidly, a fit habitation for the Presence of God, and for His service.

I ask you, brethren, to mark very closely what is said of the Tabernacle and its services. Recollect that all of it was under God's immediate direction; and that the same services were commanded by the Almighty to be kept up for ever,—meaning, of course, as long as the first Dispensation, intended for Israel, should last. That, we know, continued down to the sacrifice of Christ; and was not finally done away till the fall of Jerusalem, eighteen hundred years ago. Even the form of the Tabernacle, with its Ritual, was preserved when the gorgeous Temple was built on Mount Moriah; the only important difference being that the latter was double the size of the former. So that whatever was revealed to Israel in after times by the Prophets was independent of the Law, which was fixed and immovable. In the long eventful

period which intervenes, it is needful on many accounts that you should be warned against the danger of forgetting this.

The Tabernacle which God commanded Moses to build, was, as you know, a movable building. It was a large Tent which could be put up and taken to pieces again, and carried, by waggons, from place to place. It was indeed widely different from an ordinary tent; for it had partitions made of separate close-fitting boards* to keep the two sacred chambers, about to be described, distinct from each other and from the court of the Tabernacle. These partitions, on the inner side of the chambers, were overlaid and glittered with gold, so as, internally, to vie in splendour with the Temple of Solomon itself.

The materials, then, of the Tabernacle being ready, a level spot was chosen under Mount Sinai for its first erection, and its boundaries were marked out. These were seventy-five feet from north to south, and a hundred and fifty feet from east to west, and were enclosed with hangings of linen raised on pillars of brass,

* Ex. xxxvi. 20, 34.

with an entrance from the east. Within these boundaries of canvas, near the western end, was reared up the Tabernacle itself, the proportions of which were fifteen feet from north to south, by forty-five feet from east to west. This small but most sacred building again was divided into two unequal parts; the lesser part—a perfect square—being at the extreme west end.

This lesser division was the holiest part of all,—the Holy of Holies. It was, in truth, the appointed House in which the God and King of the Israelites was to dwell. Into that awful chamber no light was ever admitted. No sun, no moon, no lamp,—all was dark. Nor was anything placed therein but the Ark, with the Cherubim, at the western end; and the golden censer.*

The Ark † itself was a wooden coffer about four feet long by about two and a half broad and deep. It was overlaid with gold within

* For, though the Altar of Incense was just outside the Vail of the Holy of Holies, the golden censer, which was used only on one day in the year—the day of Atonement—was kept within. So says the inspired Apostle to the Hebrews, ix. 3, 4.

† Ex. xxxvii. 1–9.

and without ; and on the top of it, round about its edges, was a golden fillet or crown. The covering or top of the Ark was entirely of gold, pure and solid. *And that golden covering was God's Mercy-seat.* For, thereon were placed two golden Cherubim, facing each other north and south ; one cherub on one end of the covering and the other cherub on the other. And they stretched forth their wings on high ; and with their wings covered the Mercy-seat.

There, in that rich and sacred depository, the Two Tables—the Testimony which God gave to Moses on the Mount that He was the Ruler and King of the chosen people—were kept and secured. The Lord spake to Moses and said, ‘In the Ark shalt thou put the Testimony that I give thee. And there will I meet with thee ; and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-seat from between the two Cherubims, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.’ And Moses did so. And the Ark was made ; and the Two Tables were put into the Ark. And the Mercy-seat and the Cherubims were placed upon the Ark, in order that, by means of the High-Priest,

God, who is a Spirit, might be there consulted, through the closed vail, as the King and Counsellor of His people.

Such was the Holy of Holies ; and into this dark chamber, its roof dyed with red, its sides gorgeous with gold, this most adorable Sanctuary, none were ever permitted to enter but the High Priest. And on one* only day in the year, the day of Atonement, came the High Priest solemnly in, enveloping the Mercy-seat with incense, his feet bare, in a plain linen dress, humble as an ordinary priest ; and he sprinkled the Mercy-seat with blood.

It was the blood of the goat which had been chosen by lot out of the two appointed victims,† and had been offered up in atonement for the sins of the people.

The live victim which was left was treated thus : Aaron first laid both his hands on its head, and confessed over it all the iniquities

* Not, once only in the year ; for on the day of the Atonement the High Priest went in several times to sprinkle blood on the Mercy-seat, and each time to fumigate it with incense. Lev. xvi 12, 13, 14, 15.

† Lev. xvi. 7-10.

and transgressions of the people, and then sent it away into the wilderness. And the scape-goat bore upon his head all their iniquities into a land of separation.

So their forsaken sin was atoned for, and cast out, and forgotten.

The larger division of the Tabernacle to the east was the Holy Place, into which the priests always went, accomplishing the service of God. There, in front of the Holy of Holies, was the Altar of Incense ;* and right and left of it stood the Golden Candlesticks, and the Table of Shew Bread.

Leaving the Holy Place, we pass through its veiled entrance into the open court of the Tabernacle. Fronting us as we go out is the Laver for priestly ablutions.

Still farther east, facing the only entrance to the Court, stands the celebrated Altar, the Altar of Burnt Offerings;† the object of all attraction; the type of the Cross. There were initiated all things relating to remission of sin ;

* Ex. xxxvii. 25-28.

† Ex. xxxviii. 1-8.

for remission, recollect, was never vouchsafed without blood.*

Such was the Tabernacle of Moses. It was the first appointed place of worship for the Israelites, exhibiting types, in various forms, of the future spiritual worship of believers in Christ.

I will not distract your attention by noticing more than one form of those types; but that one is the most important, and bears most directly on the subject before us. It is, besides, that which the Epistle to the Hebrews dwells upon most strongly, and illustrates in the clearest possible manner. I speak of what, on the part of the people, was transacted in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. †

When the sacrifice had been duly slain, the High Priest went in and sprinkled the Mercy-seat with blood. And, taking the golden censer and incensing the Sanctuary, supplicated and pleaded with this typical prayer, that the offering of blood which had been made might expiate sin.

* Lev. xvii. 11. 'It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.' And Heb. x. 22.

† Lev. xvi. 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 20, 21, 22. Heb. ix.

And all the people who honestly believed in the efficacy of this atonement, were undoubtedly accepted.

This,—says the Apostle by implication,—while it answered its purpose of atonement, was a type ;—a type of the actual doings in Heaven above.

For, in the fulness of time, the hour arrived at last for the true atonement to be made. And so Christ Jesus, the Son of God, the sinless Son of Man, died to expiate the sins of the descendants of Adam. He was nailed to the Cross. His hands and His feet were wounded, and His side was pierced, and His blood poured out. But His body saw no corruption ; and He rose from the dead incorruptible and glorified, and convinced the unbelieving with the print of the nails and the mark of the spear. And so, just as He had been slain, with this print and this mark on His glorified body, He ascended up on high.

Mark this well, my brethren. Mark the important fact that, like as the High Priest, with the blood and the incense, entered the typical heaven made with hands, even so did Christ Jesus enter into Heaven itself. And there,

interceding for the guilty world, claiming the purchase of His blood, pleading the print of the nails and the mark of the spear, He sat down at the right hand of God. And there, at this moment—believe it, for it is a most certain and most blessed truth—there, even now, is our Saviour sitting, imploring our Heavenly Father on His Mercy-seat to save every soul alive who will come to Him for salvation.

There is the result, there the inestimable value of the sacrifice of the death of Christ. All former sacrifices would have been of no avail without that. But, with that, the patriarch and the Jew, who relied on their Altar, and we, who rely on the Cross, will, if sincere, be surely saved.

It is a deep subject, brethren ; but I hope I am not presumptuous in saying that to my view it is clear as crystal, and I wish you to do as I have done, and try to look through it to the bottom.

God, in the Old Testament,* says in the plainest and most positive terms, ‘ Make an

* Lev. xvi. 34. ‘ This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year.’

offering of blood on the Altar, and if done in sincerity and truth I accept it in atonement for sin.' The same is implied in the Altar offerings of Abel and Noah, of Abraham, Job, and Jacob, down to the days of the Tabernacle.

But then comes an inspired man of God afterwards,* and says convincingly, 'It is quite impossible. It is not possible that the blood of any creature upon earth—be it of bulls, or goats, or lambs, or anything of the kind—can atone for sin.'

How is this? The Scriptures are here apparently in direct opposition. How can they be reconciled; and reconciled in such a way as to be made entirely and undeniably one?

I should indeed be glad if you could see your way to the entire reconciliation and oneness as evidently as I do.

I look at the subject plainly thus: The patriarchs before Moses, and the true people of God from Moses to Christ, sacrificed on the Altar, and, according to God's promise, were pardoned and saved.

Still, as the Apostle asserts, it was not

* Heb. x. 4: 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls or of goats should take away sins.'

possible that their sacrifice of blood could have saved them,—*had it stood alone*. But, here was the reconciliation. It did not stand alone. The worshippers at the Altar sacrificed and were accepted. But generally they were not aware of the fact that their sacrifices were only typical,—only types of a future Sacrifice. That Sacrifice was Christ, the promised Seed, who was to bless them and all mankind; Christ, who was in the counsels of God slain from the foundation of the world; Christ, who in due time was actually slain, when the atonement was complete. The light and the life and the immortality which beamed from the Cross were thrown back on those Altars, and animated that which was otherwise dead.

To proceed with the narrative. The Tabernacle was now finished and set up,* and after being solemnly dedicated, its services began. The signal† was then given by the Lord Himself to move. The tents of the people were struck on the instant. All was in motion; and the twelve tribes, forming themselves into ranks,‡ prepared

* Ex. xl. 17-38.

† Num. ix. 15-23.

‡ Num. x. 14-36.

to march in settled order. Judah first, and two others; then Reuben and two others. After that came the Tabernacle, borne on waggons, guarded by the Levites, with their two trumpeters with silver trumpets to summon the people or sound the alarm. Ephraim with two tribes followed next, and Dan with the remaining two tribes closed up the rear. Thus did the army and people of Israel go forth from Mount Sinai,—a goodly and most glorious sight, and full of wonder in the wilderness. And the Kohathites, bearing the Ark, went before them. For, when the Tabernacle was taken down, Moses had cried, ‘Rise up, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee!’ And the Glory of the Lord had risen up from between the Cherubim on the Ark,* and now hovered over it, and was the signal for moving; and so the people set forward; and the Glory was a cloud to them by day, and by night it shone through the cloud and became a pillar of fire, to guide them by night as well as by day. And when they rested and the Tabernacle was set up

* Which is called (Numbers ix. 15) the tent, or house of the Testimony, *τον οἶκον τοῦ μαρτυρίου*. Sept.

again and the Ark was restored to its place in the Holy of Holies, Moses cried out, ‘Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.’

I am not giving a full history of the movements of the Israelites; of their resting-places; of their murmurings and their battles and their victories; of their rebellion on their first arrival at the banks of the Jordan. Nor can I speak—it would be far too long—of their being turned back from the Jordan into the wilderness, there to wander about for thirty-seven years more till all that generation above twenty years of age, excepting Caleb and Joshua and Moses perished and left their bones in the desert. Still I must follow them over Jordan, to which they came back again at last, because they bore with them the connecting link between the promise at the Fall and its fulfilment on the Cross. I must follow the Tabernacle, with the Ark and the Altar, till it rested for nearly four hundred years at Shiloh; after which the Ark was carried off by the Philistines, and God forsook it, and placed His name in the great Temple on Mount Moriah, and dwelt there. All this, however, must be

reserved for future consideration as each event offers itself to our notice.

For the present I can only tell you somewhat that befel the remnant of the Israelites, again grown into a countless multitude. I would show them to you humbled and submissive, encamped in the wide plain of Moab,* and urgent to pass over Jordan and to take possession. There they lay spread abroad in their white tents over the valley, to the anger and astonishment and alarm of their enemies, who looked down on them from the mountains above. No wonder that their hired prophet, Balaam, as he stood by the heathen Altar, was conscience-stricken by the manifest hand of God in thus guiding His people to the land He had promised them. And as he viewed them he poured forth his involuntary announcement of their success:

‘Balak, the king of Moab, has said, Come,† curse me Jacob; and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? Or, how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For, from the top of the rocks I see

* Num. xxii. 1.

† Num. xxiii. 7-10.

him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone and unmixed, and shall not be reckoned among the heathen: they are numberless. Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his!'

And again he lifted up his eyes, and saw Israel abiding in his tents according to his tribes. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him* and he said, 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth,—as gardens by the river side,—as cedar trees beside the waters. God brought him forth out of Egypt. He shall eat up the nations, his enemies, and shall break their bones and pierce them through with his arrows. Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee!'

How strange was all this! We have here a man of God gifted with prophecy, who was permitted to see the chosen people resting after their wanderings under the mountains beneath him. He knew of their holy sacrifices and their object; how, by their means the true

* Num. xxiv. 5-9.

believer became righteous and forgiven, so that God beheld not* iniquity or perverseness in His servants. He saw too, dimly, in the distance, the great Sacrifice Himself; and his prayer was that his own death might be the death of the righteous, and his own end like his.

And yet here, in the sight of all Israel, with frightful inconsistency, he stood by the side of the heathen altar, among the foul children of Baal, whose very worship consisted in sin, and in tempting to sin. He was not permitted indeed to curse God's children with his mouth, but he was a yet greater curse by his conduct. For, out of the myriads of Israel, twenty-four thousand souls† were lured by his counsel to partake in the abominations of Baal-peor; and they ate and drank and rose up to play, and worshipped the gods of the daughters of Moab.

The result was terrible. First God sent a plague among His people; and it cut off every soul who had sinned. And then, in anger against the tempters, God said to Moses, 'Vex the Midianites and smite them;‡ for they vex you with their wiles.' And a chosen band went

* Num. xxiii. 21.

† Num. xxv. 9.

‡ Num. xxvi. 16, 17, 18; xxxi. 3-12.

forth at his bidding, and slew all the males, together with Balaam the prophet, and all the women, too, who had sinned, and took the spoil of the land, and burned all the cities with fire.

My brethren, in these transactions—in the inconsistency of the prophet, who, loving the wages of unrighteousness, would serve both God and mammon at once; sinning himself, and the cause of sin in others; in the murmurings of the Israelites, and their weakness, and their opposition to God and his servants; and in the consequent fall of many of them—a deep lesson is taught us,—to beware of the peril of unbelief. The word preached did not profit God's chosen ones, not being mixed * with faith in them that heard it. And all that happened to them in consequence, says the word of God, was written and handed down to us for our ensample.

All took place in the wilderness on the way to the promised land. Our wilderness is the world we live in; and our promised land is the

* Heb. iv. 2-11.

spiritual land of rest and blessedness for ever,—
the kingdom of heaven. Let us, therefore,
labour with all our might, and the might vouch-
safed to us by the Spirit of God on our prayer,
to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after
the same example of unbelief.

VI.

THE ALTAR OF THE TABERNACLE.

JOSHUA xviii. 1.

And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the Tabernacle of the congregation there.

WE have followed Israel from Egypt to Sinai, and from Sinai to the banks of the Jordan, and await their passage over. Meanwhile we linger and listen with awe to the last charge of their dying chief. Moses had much to remind them of, much needful information to give them, many warnings to impress upon their hearts. And all this is done in such a way, in language so forcible and yet affectionate, that there is scarcely anything in the Old Testament more interesting than this last portion of the Books of Moses.*

Before we go on with the narrative of the

* Deuteronomy i.-iv.; xxviii.-xxxiv.

entrance into Canaan, and the setting up of the Tabernacle at Shiloh, I think it will be useful to lay before you in substance the leading points of that parting address of the great Law-giver. It will be useful, I would almost say necessary, because the details of that address are referred to as the oracle of the Jews all through their history till Jerusalem fell.

Having called the people together, Moses said : ‘ The time is come for us to part ; hearken, therefore, unto me, and obey my words, and go boldly in and possess the good land which lies before you. But take heed and beware of idolatry. For you have seen * what God did because of Baal-peor,—how all the men who followed him He has utterly destroyed. But you who were faithful on that occasion are alive every one of you this day. Therefore I say unto you, take heed.

‘ Remember, too, how mercifully the Lord dealt with you in leading you about in the wilderness for forty years ; that it was for your good, to humble you and prove you ; to know

* Deut. iv. 1-40 ; vi., vii., viii., ix.-xii.-xxx.

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what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or no. And it shall be that if, after what He has done, ye shall at all forget His goodness, ye shall utterly perish.

‘ Say not ever, in the pride of your hearts, “ It was for our righteousness that the Lord chose us and exalted us.” For, so far from that, you have been unrighteous and rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you. No; not for your righteousness, but for the wickedness of these nations are they driven out from before you, and in order that the promise of the Lord shall surely come to pass.

‘ When you are settled in that land, and God has chosen a spot in which to put His name, there and there alone all your males shall appear before Him three times a year: At the feast of the Passover, when we were passed over while others were slain;—at the feast of Weeks, in gratitude for the Law given seven weeks or fifty days from our flight out of Egypt;—and at the feast of Tabernacles, when you shall feast in booths made of branches, in remembrance of our tents in the wilderness.

‘ Understand this, that the nations you dispossess will not be put out all at once, but by

little and little, lest the beasts of the field increase upon you. But, when you are somewhat settled, you shall place great stones upon Mount Ebal, plaistered with plaister, and shall write on them very plainly the words of this law. And on Mount Gerizim shall the blessings on the obedient be put; and the curses on the disobedient on Mount Ebal. And all the blessings shall verily come to pass if you are obedient to the Lord; but, if otherwise, the curses shall fall on you to the uttermost. Swift as the eagle flieth men of a fierce countenance shall, in your latter days, come from afar and besiege you in your cities; and your high and fenced walls shall come down; and there shall be famine, and you shall eat your own flesh and blood, and your plagues shall be wonderful. I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.'

I must here in passing call your attention to the point which ought never to be forgotten. An uninquiring reader of the Bible might suppose that when the blessings are said to fall only on the obedient, and the curses on the dis-

obedient, the poor Israelites must have been in a miserable case indeed. For, as no one is without sin; as no one can do as he is bidden and love the Lord always with all his heart and soul and strength, with not a moment of forgetfulness and disloyalty, it seems a cruel mockery to say that only those who actually do so shall be blessed; and that those who fail to do so shall be cursed. Therefore, I say, never forget this: That, while there were commandments to show the Israelites what they were bound to do, there also was the sacrifice on the Altar, which, if offered in honesty and truth, would expiate their shortcomings in duty, and their lapses into sin.

Moses went on * and said to the people: 'I am an hundred and twenty years old this day: I can no more go out and come in, and God hath forbidden me to go over this Jordan.' But calling Joshua to him, he said to him before them all, 'Thou shalt lead Israel over, and cause them to inherit the land. Be strong, therefore, and of good courage; for the Lord, He it is that goeth before thee. He will go

* Deut. xxxi. 1-15.

with thee: He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: Fear not, neither be dismayed.' And when the Lord Himself, out of a pillar of fire, had audibly confirmed the appointment, the office of Moses, as leader of Israel, was brought to a close.

As their teacher, however, he had one thing more to communicate. The Lord knew the fickleness of His people, and their tendency to forget Him in their prosperity. So He taught Moses a national song* which he was to teach them; and they were to learn it diligently, that they might apply it to their hearts in sorrow, and be thus brought back to obedience. It was a song full of tenderness and force and beauty, fitted to captivate their imagination as well as to convince their reason.

It spoke of the time when the Lord found them in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness; how He led them about, instructed them, kept them as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest; fluttereth over them; spreadeth abroad her wings; taketh them; beareth them on her wings: so the Lord

* Deut. xxxi. 19; xxxii. 1-43.

led *them*; alone He led them: there was no strange God with Him. He made His people ride in triumph on the high places of the earth, that they might eat the increase of the fields, and drink the pure blood of the grape. But they waxed fat and rebelled, and forsook the Lord God who made them. And when the Lord saw it He abhorred them, and hid His face from them, and said, ‘The sword without and terror within shall destroy them, and they shall be scattered abroad.’

But, when He seeth that their power is gone, and that there is none to help them, He shall repent and say: ‘Where are their gods, the rock in whom they trusted? See now that I, even I am He that will help them, and there is no god with me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. If I whet my glittering sword and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance on mine enemies and chastise them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour the flesh of the adversary.’

‘Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants.’

Having taught the people this song, Moses parted with them with great solemnity,* and blessed them according to their tribes; and in the last words he ever uttered burst forth exultingly: ‘There is none like unto the God of Israel, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky! The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms; and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy!’

‘Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help? Thine enemies shall be subdued unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.’

Then Moses, by God’s direction, went up deliberately from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah to die,† in full view of the land he was forbidden to enter. His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And so he died, the wisest, bravest, and best of God’s ancient people,—a type of our Lord,—a far-

* Deut. xxxiii. 1-29.

† Deut. xxxiv. 1-8.

seeing prophet to the end of time. And they buried him in a valley over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

The time had now arrived for Israel to enter into Canaan. And God said to Joshua,* ‘Moses my servant is dead: now therefore arise and go over this Jordan unto the land which I give you. Every place upon which the sole of your foot shall tread, all shall be yours. Only be strong and very courageous, and observe all the Law of Moses, and meditate upon it day and night, and do it without swerving, that you may prosper. Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.’

And Joshua obeyed,† and led the people at once to the banks of the Jordan. The river at that time of early harvest was swollen to the very brim, and impassable. But, on the third morning, when they were duly prepared, he commanded them to move boldly forward, telling them, Hereby they should know that the living

* Josh. i. 1—9.

† Josh. iii. iv.

God was among them, and that they should drive out their enemies: 'Behold, the Ark of the Covenant passeth over before you into Jordan, and the waters of Jordan shall be cut off.'

And the priests took up the Ark upon their shoulders and went forward. It was a moment of anxiety, but only a moment; for, when the feet of those who bore the Ark were dipped in the brim of the water, the waters which came down from Tiberias stood and rose up upon a heap, as it were a wall of ice; and the waters which went downwards flowed off and failed, and the bed of the river became dry to the level of the Dead Sea below. And the priests who bore the Ark stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan. And there they rested without alarm, till all the host had marched by them, and were passed clean over Jordan. Then the twelve appointed men, a man for each tribe, did as they were bidden, and out of the place where the priests' feet stood, raised twelve stones to make a memorial of the event. And they took every man a stone upon his shoulder, and went and set them up in the neighbouring Gilgal, as a memorial for ever that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the

Lord. Last of all came up the Ark itself out of Jordan ; and when the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto dry land, the waters of Jordan flowed down in their channel as before.

So the Lord magnified Joshua on that day, as He had magnified Moses at the Red Sea. And Joshua encamped with all his host at Gilgal, which for the present he made the base of his operations. His great object was to push on to Shechem without delay ; for he had much to do in a spot consecrated of old by the sojourn of Abraham and the purchase of Jacob. He had to plant the stones, inscribed with a copy of the Law, on Mount Ebal ; to raise an altar there and to sacrifice ; and in the most emphatic manner to renew the covenant of God with Israel on their entrance into the land of promise. He had also a private duty, but a very sacred one, to perform. For, two hundred years before, in the fullest faith in God's word to Abraham, Joseph had intreated, on his death-bed, with a solemn adjuration, that his bones might be carried up by his descendants, and buried in the plot of ground purchased by his father Jacob at Shechem. And when the Israelites went up

out of Egypt they took his bones with them, and sacredly guarded them during all their wanderings in the wilderness, and now were ready to carry out his wish.

But no safe advance could be made from the encampment at Gilgal till the fortified cities which lay between that place and Shechem were subdued. And so Joshua at the special instigation of the Lord Himself, the Captain of the host, utterly destroyed Jericho by a miracle;* and then stretched out the noted spear that was in his hand† towards Ai; and the ambush which he had laid arose and captured the city unawares, and burnt it and made it desolate.

Then it was, and not before, that, leaving the guarded Tabernacle at Gilgal, he went forward to Shechem,‡ and built the prescribed altar on Mount Ebal, and sacrificed, and wrote the law upon the plastered stones; and placed six of the tribes on the terraced sides of Mount Ebal, and the other six on Mount Gerizim; and read the Law to all the congregation, men, women,

* Josh. v. 13-15; vi. 1-21. † Josh. viii. 18-23.

‡ Josh. viii. 30-35.

and children, and they assented to it, and accepted it to the full.

And after that, he reverently buried the bones of Joseph;* and the spot of his burial is shown to this day,—and we saw it,—not far from the well of Jacob, where Jesus a long while after sat weary and rested Himself and gave to the Samaritan woman the water of Life.

It was not to be expected that the many war-like kingdoms of Canaan, small though they were, would yield without a struggle to their strange invaders from Egypt. And so we read that hearing of the overthrow of Jericho and Ai,† the five kings of the South, headed by the King of Jerusalem, made a league, and sat down before Gibeon. For the Gibeonites by stratagem were‡ in league with Israel, and Israel engaged to help them against their enemies. And encouraged by a voice from Heaven, Joshua went up suddenly from Gilgal by night and overthrew them. And, in order that their overthrow might be more complete, the Lord

* Josh. xxiv. 32. † Josh. x. 1-13. ‡ Josh. ix. 3.

cast down great hailstones upon them, and took away the darkness of one whole night. For Joshua had prayed, ‘Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon!’ And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, and the slaughter went on; and so the Lord fought for Israel till the enemy was destroyed.

And the kings of the North* heard of the conflict and the destruction. And Lebanon and Hermon, Esdraelon and Upper Jordan, joined their forces against Israel, and set them in battle array by the waters of Merom. And Joshua came upon them also suddenly, and smote them, and left none remaining.

And when, after that, he came back to the South and cut off the Anakims of Hebron and of the mountains, sparing only Gaza and Gath and Ashdod, the whole land rested from war, and was divided by lot among the tribes.

Now at last the long-looked for opportunity had come for the establishment of the Church of God in Canaan. At last there was security ;†

* Josh. xi.

† Josh. xi. 23.

and the Lord God of Israel fixed upon a spot in which to put his name ;—a spot where His worship might be carried out as at first on the plain beneath Sinai.

It was a spot so central that all the tribes, by their males could there assemble with ease at the great appointed Festivals, three times a year.* The spot was Shiloh. And Joshua sent to Gilgal, *and the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled at Shiloh, and set up the Tabernacle of the congregation there.* There, in the sacred neighbourhood of Shechem, hallowed by the sojourn of Abraham, the possessions of Jacob, and the burial-place of Joseph, the tribes came up to worship for the space of four hundred years. There was the Holy Altar of Moses. There were the sacrifices. There was the High Priest ; there the Presence of God in His dark Sanctuary to hear and answer the prayers of His faithful people.

You must bear in mind that the form of this curtained temple and the services in which the people joined, never varied. They were fixed by the express and definite command of God through Moses ; and from the time he first

* Josh. xviii. 1.

received them on Mount Sinai, till all, by God's sanction were abolished with the Temple of Sacrifice on Mount Moriah, they continued the same. As, therefore, the subject of these Lectures is a narrative of the Atonement from first to last, we have only to follow the fortunes of the Tabernacle and of the Temple up to the Sacrifice of Christ Himself, and our narrative will be unbroken. For, in the Altars of the Patriarchs and of the Tabernacle and the Temple, and nowhere else, was the Atonement for sin commemorated and foreshown. And the doings of the Israelites recorded in Joshua and the Judges and the Books which follow, interesting and important as they are, and much to be studied for their profitableness in reproof, correction, and instruction, must not divert our attention from the special object which we have in view.

For a long while, during the days of Joshua and of the first elders that over-lived Joshua, all went on well with Israel; and God was with the people, and they prospered. But, when their chief waxed old,* he had evil forebodings;

* Josh. xxiii. 1-16.

and calling them together he said, 'I am old and stricken in age, and ye have seen all that the Lord has done for you. Much, however, remains to be done on your part. Be ye, therefore, very courageous in keeping and doing all that is written in the Law of Moses. For, if ye do in any wise go back from it and cleave to the nations which remain'—for some had been spared—'nations, all of which ye were commanded to drive out, know for a certainty that they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.'

Not satisfied with this, he assembled them again at Shechem in order to renew on that hallowed spot their covenant with God ; and again, by God's direction, addressed them thus : 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel,—Your fathers in old time dwelt on the other side of Euphrates and served other gods. And I took Abraham from among them, and led him throughout Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And to Isaac I gave Jacob. And

* Josh. xxiv. 1-28.

Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. And ye came over Jordan, and conquered the people of this land, but, not by thy sword, nor by thy bow. And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them.'

Such, in substance, was what the Lord Himself, through Joshua, recalled to their minds in order to constrain their willing obedience. 'Now, therefore,' proceeded Joshua, 'serve the Lord, and put away the gods of your forefathers and of Egypt. And if to you it seem evil to serve the Lord who has done so much for you, choose you this day whom ye will serve,—whether the gods of your forefathers or the gods of this land ; but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.' And they answered unhesitatingly, 'God forbid that we should forsake the Lord who has done so much for us ! No. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.'

And Joshua said, 'Ye cannot serve the Lord and idols too ; for He is a Holy God ; He is a jealous God ; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.' And the people said, 'Nay, but we will serve the Lord alone.'

And when Joshua told them that they were witnesses against themselves that they had chosen the Lord, they said, 'We are witnesses.' 'Now, therefore,' said the earnest man of God, with his last breath, as it were, 'put away the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart wholly unto the Lord God of Israel.' And the people answered solemnly—and the stone beneath the Ark which stood by the Sanctuary attested the oath—'The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey.'

Alas, out of the four centuries during which the Church was established at Shiloh, one fourth part at least was passed by the wavering Israelites in breaking that solemn oath,* in serving idol-gods, and in mixing with those against whose companionship they had been warned as a sin and a snare. It would be unjust, however, to their memory to forget the long unnoticed intervals,† amounting to a space of three hundred years, which were dedicated by them to the worship and obedience of the

* Judges ii. 10–13.

† Judges ii. 7.

true God. And I would gladly recount the deeds of bravery and goodness which signalised the Judges who were raised up, as occasion required, to lead the people successfully to battle, and to bring them back into the path of duty. But time would fail me. The time would fail me to tell even of the best of them, of Gideon and Barak, of Samson and Jephtha. All I can do now will be to draw your attention briefly to the lapse of the people at last into gross idolatry, which broke up the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and brought its worship there to a close.

The Psalmist refers to this event; and in doing so speaks of the Lord as he would speak of a man irritated at the report of the foul high places and the graven images resorted to by his children. ‘When God heard of their idolatry,’* he says, ‘He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel, so that He forsook the Tabernacle in Shiloh, the Tent which He had pitched among men; and delivered His strength—meaning the strong refuge of His protecting

* Psalm lxxviii. 56–61.

Ark—into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand.'

So it came to pass indeed.* He brought up the Philistines against them. Alarmed at their danger, deluded by their superstition, the besotted Israelites, without consulting God, took the symbol of His Presence into the field of battle. But the great Presence Itself had retired in anger. The Oracle was dumb. God was against them, and they were overthrown; and the Ark, with its precious Tables within, together with the Mercy-seat upon it, was carried off by the triumphant heathen to Ashdod. How they, too, were punished for their profanation; how they sent off the dangerous possession in dismay; how David, in the end, took it home, in exultation, to Zion, I will dwell upon more at large when we come—as I purpose next—to the building of the great Temple in which it was deposited on Mount Moriah.

Meanwhile I bid you think, brethren, of what was then the condition of the chosen people,—chosen, but cast off for the time,—cast off, but

* 1 Sam. iv. 1–18.

not utterly hardened. God, their only defence, had left them, and they had no Mercy-seat to fly to.

I bid you think of them, and then of yourselves. We come to the House of God to pray. We are grieved and wearied with the burden of our sins. The heart of each of us knoweth its own bitterness. We have many private sorrows wanting relief. We have sorrows within and alarm without,—the plague threatening our means of subsistence, the pestilence ready to fall on our homes; wars, and rumours of wars all around us. Suppose that the God of mercy, but of justice also, were really and actually to withdraw His Presence from us at this time, as He then did from His people, and, in consequence of our misdoings, would not listen to our prayers. I bid you think whether any condition could be more terrible than ours,—whether we should not of all men be the most miserable?

May that condition never be ours! May we never be left without hope! O God, forsake us not, but hear us, we beseech Thee, through the merits and mediation of Thy beloved Son!

VII.

THE ALTAR OF THE TEMPLE.

2 CHRONICLES vii. 12.

And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said unto him, 'I have heard thy prayer and have chosen this place to Myself for an House of Sacrifice.'

THE Tabernacle of Moses being set aside, the Temple of Solomon took its place as an House of Sacrifice in atonement for sin.

I am to speak, then, to-day, in the due course of my narrative, of the first building of the Temple on Mount Moriah. For, God put it into the heart of king David to feel the need of a fixed and becoming House to His glory. The people long before had prayed for* a king, and the government by Judges had ceased. And God, in His anger, had consented, and given them a King, though He, the Lord God

* 1 Sam. viii. 4-9; ix. 15-17.

Himself was their King. And He sent them Saul first; and* then David who ruled over all Israel, having captured Jerusalem—and dwelt in Sion. And now king David, with grateful alacrity and pious zeal got together materials for† the building of the Lord's House, and year by year accumulated funds almost without limit to carry out his design.

Meanwhile what was he to do? Criminal as he had been, he was not hardened,—far from it; and God pitied him and loved him still. But David was overwhelmed with remorse and penitence, and yearned for a settled spot in which, under all the unmerited favours he had received, he might pour out his soul at the Mercy-seat, and there, and not at the unauthorized Gibeon, sacrifice and pray for the atonement of his sins.

For God, as we have seen, had forsaken Shiloh, the place in which He had first put His name. The Ark of His presence‡ had been carried off by the Philistines; but to them and their idol it had proved a destructive plague. Seeing this, they called to mind what God had

* 1 Sam. xvi. 1-13.

† 2 Sam. vii. 1-29.

‡ 1 Sam. iv. 1-11.; v.; vi.; vii. 1, 2.

done to Pharaoh, when he would not let the Israelites go, and they sent off the Ark of God in alarm. Whither they should send it they knew not; so placing it in a carriage drawn by two milch kine, they allowed them to take their own way; and they took the way from Ekron to Bethshemesh a city of priests, lowing as they went. And certain men of that city who were at harvest work in the fields heard the lowing, and received the Ark. But they, too, dismissed it suddenly in the utmost terror; for, they had looked profanely into the mysterious chest, and thousands of the foolish people had been struck dead for their offence. After that the people of Kirjath-jearim took charge of it for twenty years till the time of King David, who,* when it had rested with Obed Edom and blessed his house with many blessings for three months, bore it up gladly and with great triumph to his newly-made temporary Tabernacle on Mount Sion. For, the old worn-out Tabernacle of Moses—together with its Altar—was still in Gibeon,† to which place it had been taken from Shiloh; and there remained till the Temple was finished.

* 2 Sam. vi. 1-17. † 1 Chron. xxi. 29.

So David to the utmost of his power got all things ready for the Temple. But, as Moses for his want of faith at the waters of Meribah, was denied an entrance into the land to which he had long looked forward, so David who had dipped his hands in blood and was still a man of war, with warlike aspirations, was denied the glory of raising the edifice on which he had set his heart. All around him, indeed, was now at peace. His enemies on every side were subdued and his subjects filled the land. But, instead of being humbly grateful for his elevation and success, his heart swelled with pride. And the great spiritual adversary saw it and marked him for his own. Satan, at his own fall from heaven, had tempted our first parents and they too had fallen. He had then gone to and fro in the earth and had tried the patient and holy Job, but there he had failed. And now David with all his faults the most high-minded and devout and tender-hearted of men laid himself open to his wiles.* And Satan, by God's permission, stood up against Israel, and provoked David who had evidently a military, ambitious object in view,

* 1 Chron. xxi. 1-30 ; xxii. 1.

to number his people. And the Evil one was successful, and David fell. And God was greatly displeased and smote Israel.

The offence, however, had been committed by David in haste, and not in premeditated defiance of God's will; and *conscience-stricken he fell on his knees at once and cried, 'I have sinned, O Lord; but, O Lord, I beseech Thee do away the iniquity of thy servant; for, I have done very foolishly.' But he was not to be forgiven without a heavy and public reproof; and being offered the choice of three modes of punishment, he chose the three days infliction of the Sword of the Lord, even the pestilence of the destroying Angel, in all the coasts of Israel.

And the pestilence fell. And when at last the Angel came to Jerusalem and hung over it to destroy it, the Lord said 'It is enough: stay now thy hand!' And the winged minister of God's anger descended and stood outside the City to the east, by the threshing-floor of Araunah on the south-west of the platform of Mount Moriah. And Araunah and his sons,

* 2 Sam. xxiv. 10-25; 1 Chron. xxi.

who were threshing wheat with their oxen, hid themselves from the Angel in one of the caves of the mountain side.

And when David looked from the new Tabernacle on Mount Sion he saw the Angel risen again and standing between the earth and the heaven with a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem ; and he fell on his face with the elders clothed in sackcloth and said, ‘Lo, I have sinned and done wickedly ; but these sheep what have they done ? Let Thine hand I pray Thee be against me and my father’s house.’ And, at his humiliation and prayer, the pestilence fully ceased.

And David, directed by the prophet, crossed the valley, and went up to the threshing-floor ; and Araunah came forth from his hiding-place reverently to meet him ; and as a king treating with a king, sold him the threshing-floor by which the Angel had stood. And there, on that very spot, David built an altar at God’s command, and placed on it his offerings, and called upon the Lord to accept him. And the Lord answered him from heaven by fire, and accepted and forgave him.

After this, terrified by the sword of the Angel,

he went no more to the old Tabernacle and Altar of Moses, which were still in their place at Gibeon, saying ‘This is the spot for the House of the Lord God, and this is the Altar of the burnt-offering for Israel.’

When David felt himself growing old, he called to him his son Solomon; and with some lingering feeling of sorrow mixed with pride, told him that God had rejected himself, a man of war, from building a Temple for His worship, but had assigned the high office to him, his son, a man of peace. ‘Now, therefore, my son,’ he proceeded, ‘be thou strong, and, youthful as thou art, show thyself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord and His statutes, as it is written in the Law of Moses. Arise and be doing, and the Lord be with thee!’

Thus was King Solomon designated by God Himself to be builder of the first permanent Temple to His honour. And it gives extraordinary interest to every existing relic of that Temple to know that—as before with the Tabernacle—so the same God now provided the plan of the new edifice to its minutest details.

For, it is said expressly,* that David gave to Solomon the pattern of the whole building; and having specified its different parts, ‘All this,’ said David, ‘the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.’

At this time the city of Jerusalem—formerly Jebus—was confined to the higher range of hills to the west; and the palace of the king was on Mount Sion, opposite the platform purchased by King David from Araunah, an ejected prince of the old city Jebus.

A valley, running north and south, divided the higher western from the lower eastern range of hills, the southern rocky platform of which was called Moriah. For reasons which I have given elsewhere,† we will assume that the actual spot on Mount Moriah where David built his commemorative altar, was on the south-western portion of the platform, the spot in the threshing-floor on which the feet of the pacified Angel stood. That was the spot‡ marked out for ‘the House of the Lord God’

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 11–21.

† ‘The Temple and the Sepulchre.’—*Longmans*.

‡ 1 Chron. xxii. 1.

by David; and on that spot it was built by his son.

What was done to complete the preparations, and to carry out the pattern,—how cedar and fir from Lebanon were got ready and brought down in floats to Joppa,—how the vast stone blocks were bevelled and fitted beforehand, so that in building neither hammer nor axe was heard in the House,—what countless workmen busily toiled at their silent work,—all that I pass by, as unfitted for this place, and uncalled for by the object I have in view. One point, however, I must notice, relating to the foundations. These were built of great stones,* costly stones and hewed stones, and some of them exist even now, a wonder to behold. To make the chosen spot a platform sufficiently large, the substructions were laid at the spur of the mount, so that as the wall rose in height the vacant space between it and the incline of the mount was filled in with earth and with stone-masonry cramped together with iron; and to enable the wall to bear the thrust of this heavy mass, its stones were tied together with lead,

* 1 Kings v. 17, 18.

and so made, it would seem, ‘indestructible for all time.’

I will only add, before coming to the Dedication,—the details of which are of such interest as to demand our special attention,—that the Temple with its courts was four square from out to out, being on each side a stadium or six hundred feet long.

With regard to the Temple proper within this square,—that is, the Holy Place for the priests, and the Holy of Holies for the Ark with its Mercy-seat,—it corresponded in form with the golden splendour of the Tabernacle within,—with this difference, that it was solid and just double the size.

At some distance apart to the east, fronting the entrance to these Holy Places,—as in the Tabernacle,—stood the Altar, the great Altar of Burnt offerings, the most conspicuous object of the whole. And well it might be, for it was that around which all the great business of the people’s devotion turned; and which, in His own marked words, made the House which God chose to Himself, ‘an House of Sacrifice.’

But the sacred Ark was still in the new Taber-

nacle on Mount Sion ; and all things being now ready for its reception, it was borne with great pomp across the valley, and so brought up to the Temple, and placed with its Mercy-seat and small Cherubim, in its proper position. This was at the west end of the Holy of Holies, beneath the broad outstretched wings of the new golden cherubim which covered all.

The plan of the Temple, then, let me repeat, was this : First, as the point to which all devout thoughts were directed, was the Mercy-seat on the top of the Ark,—the symbol of God's dwelling-place in heaven,—where God engaged to be present in Spirit to hear and answer the prayer of the upright.

Next to this, in the Holy Place, and facing the veiled entrance to the Holy of Holies, stood the Altar of incense, which symbolized, when smoking, the offering up of prayer to the Mercy-seat within.

Then, still to the east, outside the Holy Place and looking towards the Mercy-seat, came the Altar of Burnt offerings last of all, but the first object seen on entering the court of the Temple from the east.

You will now, I think, with this repetition of detail, be able to understand clearly the majestic ceremony with which Solomon closed his labours and dedicated his great work to Almighty God.

He began by an abundant offering of sacrifice on the Altar ; but put no fire under. And the choir of singers,* arrayed in white linen, placed themselves at the east end of the Altar, and accompanied in unison by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, burst forth into thanksgivings unto the Lord, chanting at every close, ‘ For, He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever ! ’ And lo, in token of God’s presence, a cloud of glory filled the Temple, so bright and dazzling as to overpower the ministrations of the priests within.

Then Solomon himself came forth ; and ascending† the brazen platform placed for the purpose in front of the Altar, turned his face and blessed the whole congregation of the children of Israel who stood in the court around him. After that he knelt down upon his knees before the people and spread forth

* 2 Chron. v. 11–14.

† 2 Chron. vi. 12–13.

his hands before the Mercy-seat, the symbol of heaven, and in substance prayed thus : *

‘ O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee in heaven, nor in the earth, nor under the earth, who keepest covenant and showest mercy unto Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their hearts. Now, therefore, O Lord God, let Thy word be verified which Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant David.

‘ But, will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth ? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee : how much less this House which I have built ! Have respect, therefore, unto the supplications of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel : hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling-place, and when Thou hearest, forgive.

‘ When an appeal is made by oath before Thee, do Thou clear the innocent and expose the guilty.

‘ If Israel be defeated in war because they have sinned, on their repentance hear them and forgive.

‘ In all judgments ; in want of rain—in death,

* 2 Chron. vi. 14-42.

—pestilence,—blasting and mildew ; in locusts and caterpillars, and sieges by the enemy : whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there may be,—then, what prayer or supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all Thy people Israel ; when every one shall know his own sore or his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house,—then hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling-place, and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart Thou only knowest.

‘Hear also the stranger’s prayer, that all people of the earth may know Thy name, and fear Thee.

‘In going to war, hear Thou the prayer and supplication of Thy people, and maintain their cause.

‘If they sin against Thee—for there is no man that sinneth not—and they be captured in war, yet, if they return to Thee with all their heart, hear Thou, and forgive Thy people who have sinned against Thee.

‘Now, O my God, let, I beseech Thee, Thine eyes be open, and Thine ears attent unto the prayer which is made in this place. Arise, O Lord God, into Thy Resting Place, Thou and

the Ark of Thy strength. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness !’

Solomon had scarcely ended His prayer,* when, in attestation of approval, fire came down from heaven and consumed the offerings and sacrifices which he had placed on the Altar before him. And when all the people saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord filled the House, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, and chanted with the choir, ‘For He is good ;—for His mercy endureth for ever !’

And at night the Lord appeared unto Solomon, and said, ‘I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an House of Sacrifice.†

‘If I shut up heaven that there be no rain ; or, if I command the locusts to devour the land ; or, if I send pestilence among My people ;—if My people shall humble themselves, and pray,

* 2 Chron. vii. 1.

† 2 Chron. vii. 12–22.

and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways,—then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Mine eyes shall be open and Mine ear attent unto the prayer that is made in this place ; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually.

‘ And as for thee, if thou shalt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do as I have commanded thee, then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, and there shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.

‘ But if ye shall at all turn from following Me, ye or your children, and will not keep My commandments and My statutes, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then will I cut off Israel out of the land, and this House which I have hallowed, will I cast out of my sight.

‘ And Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people ; and at this House, which is high, everyone that passeth by it shall be astonished and shall hiss. And when they ask, “ Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land and to this House ? ” they shall answer, “ Because they forsook the Lord their God who

brought forth their fathers out of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and worshipped them and served them: therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil.” ’

Thus Solomon dedicated his Temple; and God accepted it as an House of Sacrifice. Thus he left us a practical illustration of what was true and laudable worship in the Jewish Church. It consisted, as we have seen, of sacrifice and prayer and heartfelt obedience to the law of Moses, which was none other than the law of God binding upon that Church for ever.

With these facts before us we may be permitted, in conclusion, to suppose a case. Solomon was the wisest of men. He was conscious of it himself, and the world acknowledged it. Suppose that afterwards,—after all that had occurred, after all that God Himself had absolutely and distinctly laid down as the law of His Church, Solomon, in the pride of his great wisdom, had argued thus: ‘I am against this unreasonable sacrifice and shedding of blood. I look upon the whole system, which makes my Temple a vast slaughter-house, with aversion.

The Lord, I am sure, will be better pleased with the milder offerings of justice and charity and pureness of life.' If Solomon had argued and acted thus, it is quite clear that, like Cain of old,* he would have framed a faith of his own; and though he was a Jew by birth, he would, in religion, have been no Jew at all.

On the other hand, had Solomon sacrificed and worshipped without justice and charity and pureness of heart, it is equally clear that, however attentive to outward rites, he would have been counted, in God's sight, as no true member of His Church. For,† he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, in the heart; in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The moral lies upon the surface. And it is this: that in the case supposed, these things ought he to have done, and not to have left the other undone. It is the same, brethren, with ourselves, with this difference, that we look from the typical sacrifice to that which was

* Who has been called the first Neologian.

† Rom. ii. 28, 29.

real,—from the Altar to the Cross. We look to the one great sacrifice of the death of Christ; and if we look in faith we shall be saved. But then, to be secure, we must add * to our faith the graces of faith. For thus only shall an entrance be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

* 2 Peter i. 5, 6, 7, 11. Virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity.

VIII.

THE ALTAR OF THE TEMPLE.

HEBREWS viii. 13.

*Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is
ready to vanish away.*

WHEN Solomon, king of the chosen people of God, had reigned for forty long years over all Israel, and had displayed to the world his wisdom and his magnificence, his idolatry and his sinfulness, he died; and from that moment the kingdom, with occasional outbursts of vigour, began to decay.

The account of his reign is one which we read with such mingled feelings of admiration and distress, not to say loathing, that it is necessary for our relief to call constantly to mind the object for which the Jews—and among them Solomon himself—were chosen by God to be His special people. It was this: that,* like

* 1 Samuel vi. 10-12.

the carriage which conveyed the Ark of the the Covenant from Ekron to Bethshemesh, they were simply to be the vehicle of God's Covenant with man from one fixed period to another,—from one place, which was Sinai, to the ruined temple on Mount Moriah, when a new revelation of His will would go forth in its stead.

I hope it will not be tedious to you, my hearers, if I take you over ground which we have travelled before. It is desirable that I should do this; for I have to point out to you some fresh views as we proceed; and most certainly the short remainder of our journey will thus be made all the more plain and easy.

At the fall of man it was the gracious will of God that instead of punishing him and his descendants irremediably, His own Son, who was sinless, should die as a sacrifice and atonement for the sin of man. By this means He would show Himself strictly just,* and yet

* Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. 'Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of

retain the satisfaction of justifying the sinner. But, in His Omniscience, He knew that, in the natural course of things, a long period of thousands of years must pass before the world would be duly fitted, by a general inter-communion, to receive that sacrifice, and for the knowledge of it to be circulated among men.

What, then, was to be done meanwhile? That was done which we have all along been considering. By God's direction altars were to be raised and sacrifices slain as emblems of what was to be. And so, by faith, Abel made his sacrifice; and so all the patriarchs, down to the time of Moses, made theirs; and by this act, performed in sincerity and truth, the sins of each worshipper were atoned for and forgiven.

And, when a large and distinct Church was set up, and the Israelites under Moses were gathered into one, the same truth was carried on by sacrifices still. The Tabernacle service abounded with symbols and types, all telling

sins that are passed, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness, *that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

the same tale in various forms. These symbols and types were ordained by God Himself to represent the future, and were to continue unaltered in substance through the service of the Temple, till the one great Sacrifice should be offered on the Cross, and the fact be made known to the world.

It was a very high honour to the Israelites to be thus chosen out from the rest of the world to be the depository and vehicle of God's will till the time appointed for the great change. For they had not deserved it: far otherwise. Hear how Moses at the Jordan disposes of that delusion. He says to them plainly, 'From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord. Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.' And God Himself declares,* through His prophet Jeremiah, 'The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth.'

The simple truth is that the Jews, in them-

* Jer. xxxii. 30.

selves, were as the heathen around them, and longed to act as the heathen, and in a great degree did so act. And if it be asked, What advantage had they in being thus chosen out from others? the answer is put into our mouths :* *Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.* But not only so. To the Jews pertained † ‘*the adoption* into God’s family as His own children; and, sinful as they were, they were still regarded and treated as such. They had also *the glory* of God’s perpetual presence with them to guide them in all their ways, if they chose to be so guided. And they had *the covenants*, too, by which He engaged, if they did their part, to uphold them and bless them, as He did their fathers. And to them was given *the Law* for their rule of life; and *the service of God* in all its details to regulate their worship; and *the promises* of future blessings, especially of a Messiah. *Whose were the fathers* from Abraham downwards; and *of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.*’

* Rom. iii. 2.

† Rom. ix. 4, 5.

These were advantages on the part of the Jews of such infinite value as abundantly to overpay the burden of being the vehicle of God's will from one generation to another. And so many and so great were the wonders that God worked in taking obstacles out of their path,—parting the Red Sea,—feeding them, where there was no food, in the wilderness,—drying up a way across Jordan—levelling cities—destroying enemies,—that their history is the history of a miracle, unlike every other history in the world; and can only be read without difficulty and distress, when read without a shadow of distrust in the truth of its inspiration.

When we look, then, upon the Jews as special instruments in God's hands for carrying out His designs for the good of the whole world, we may be shocked and grieved at the record of their sins, but it does not weaken our faith. We read on and gather strength; for we see the good time approaching; the old covenant waxing older and older* and ready to vanish away. For example—to come back to the narrative—we read of Solomon, after his

* Heb. viii. 13.

chequered life of magnificence and wisdom and folly, dying; and of Rehoboam his son reigning in his stead. We read of that son's infatuation and pride; and of the irritated kingdom rent in twain.* 'What portion,' cried the Israelites, 'have we in David? To your tents, O Israel!' And they call the banished Jeroboam out of Egypt,† and make him their king.

And they go in peace into Samaria;‡ for such is God's will. While, however, there were to be two kingdoms, there was to be but one church. That was the law for ever. The revolted Israelites were still to come up, at the three stated times, to the Temple, as before. But, instead of that, they disobey the law, and make their Church a political Church.§ They fear the loyalty of the people to their new king, and that when they go up to Jerusalem they will go back to their allegiance in Judah. And to check their going up, they do what Aaron did of old;|| They make them golden calves to worship, and cry: 'Behold thy gods, O Israel!'

* 1 Kings xii. 6-16. † 1 Kings xii. 2, 20.

‡ 1 Kings xii. 24. 'This thing is from me.'

§ 1 Kings xii. 26, 27, 28.

|| Ex. xxxii. 4-7.

And they follow Aaron and man's device, and cast off Moses and the word of God.

And so Jeroboam—for the deep scheme was his—earned for himself the everlasting infamy of being ‘Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.’ It mattered not that through those calves they worshipped God as represented by them. God had forbidden all worship of any image whatever framed by the hands of man, and would not have it. Still, in His love, He sent them prophets to recall them to their duty, but they would not hear.

The result was, that they were at last left to themselves, and fell into utter sensuousness and heathenism. They worshipped the gods of the heathen,* and as a necessary inevitable consequence, sinned grossly and irremediably against the God of heaven; and in the end the whole of the ten tribes, men, women, and children, and every hoof of their cattle, all are carried off bodily into Assyria; and Israel, as a people, is heard of no more.

We come back to Judah, and Jerusalem, and the Temple. And lo, the Jews also of Judah

* 2 Kings xvii. 13 to 24.

are become worshippers of idols, and are sinning with a high hand even in the courts of the Temple, and before the Altar of God Himself. And again God is angry; but, before striking, bids them hearken to His prophets; but they refuse. Again and again he warns them, that while sacrifice is indispensable, He looks to the contrite heart to make it availing;* that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Him; and that He hates and despises† their feast days, so ill in accordance with the holiness of His law.

His forbearance at length gives way. ‘And because,’ He says to them by the mouth of Jeremiah, ‘ye have not heard My words,‡ this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment. And these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.’ And Nebuchadnezzar comes up to Jerusalem and takes it, imprisoning the king, and carrying off some royal captives,

* Psa. li. 17, 19. ‘The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart Thou wilt not despise. *Then* shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering. *Then* shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.’

† Amos v. 21.

‡ Jer. xxv. 11.

—and among them Daniel—to stand before him in his palace. Jerusalem again revolting, it is captured a second and third time. The City and the Temple in the end are razed to the ground;* the people—including the prophet Ezekiel—are carried away, and none left but certain of the poor to dress the vineyards and till the fields. Jeremiah, indeed, having done his best to mitigate the infliction, is spared to pour out his Lamentations over his country and people.

There, then, in Babylon and the country of Chaldaea round about, are the remnant of the chosen people in captivity; but not without consolation. For Ezekiel, their bold outspoken prophet is with them; and he first softens their hearts by laying bare their sins, and then speaks to them and comforts them by symbols. He points to a glorious spiritual future. This is to spread over all nations through them. He holds up to their view† a representation of the Church of God, enlarged and extended,—a description of a vast Temple with all its preg-

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17–22.

† Ez. xl.–xlvii. 13.

nant details. And in order that they may not be misled, and take it for their own Temple rebuilt and restored to more than its former splendour, it is drawn so large, of such excessive dimensions that the site of all Jerusalem could not have held it. So that that they saw was an impossible notion; and the far-seeing among them must have looked for a meaning more glorious still.

The prophet goes on and says, that when the Spirit of the Lord had shown him all this, he was brought to the eastern door of the Temple. And behold, waters issued out from under the threshold. And the waters, shallow at first, were measured, and they reached to the ankles. Again and again, as the waters flowed gradually on, they were measured, and they rose up to the knees; then to the loins; then they became an impassable river. And very many trees were on the bank of the river on both sides; trees, whose leaves were medicinal, and would never fade; whose fruit would be good for food, and never fail.

What could this Temple be, and what this river, small at first and becoming fathomless by degrees? What, but emblems of the fulfilment

of the promise to their father Abraham that in him, and in his Seed—which was Christ, the Messiah—all families of the earth should be blessed ; emblems of the Church of God enlarged and extended, and reaching, with its waters of life and health, to all believers in every nation under heaven ?

So the captive children of Israel were encouraged and cheered.

But they had also Daniel, the prophet, and his voice was yet more definite and clear. For when he prophesied, the seventy years of their captivity were nearly ended, and he told them first what he had learnt from Jeremiah, of their speedy return, and of the restoration of their city, and the rebuilding of their Temple.

Let me speak to you particularly of the prophet Daniel. He was a man greatly beloved of God and His people. And you will not wonder at this when you read of his doings in Babylon. He, the son of royal parents, was chosen to attend the king ; and so temperately, so modestly, so wisely did he bear himself, that he was speedily raised* over the head of others,

* Daniel vi. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 21.

to a post of great honour, and so provoked the hatred and jealousy of the native princes. He was so brave and consistent a believer withal, that his outspoken courage put him into his enemies' power. With his window wide open he confessed God in his chamber three times a day, and turning his face toward Jerusalem prayed to God Almighty to forgive his sins and the sins of his people. No single fault could be found in him but this, which is an honest man's highest glory,—devotion to his Maker. Seeing this, the presidents and princes met, and made Daniel's conduct a capital crime by making a law against all prayer except to the king. And Daniel, persevering, and not praying to the king but to God in Heaven, he was condemned and thrown to the lions.

You well know how God displayed his love to him by a miracle in the sight of the heathen.* So, when he came forth uninjured from the den of lions, the heathen king became a convert to the great Being who could do such wonders to save His servants. And he, the absolute monarch of the world, he, whom all were bound

* Daniel vi. 23, 25, 26, 27.

to obey, made an irreversible decree, that ‘In every dominion of his kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and stedfast for ever ; and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth ; and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth,—Who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.’

There is nothing like this on record, so grand, so immortalising to the cause of it. For to Daniel, under God, it was solely owing that the vast Babylonian empire was turned from heathenism to the acknowledgement of the true God. And we may well think with grateful and approving wonder of the special glory in store for him hereafter, when, in his own inspired words,* ‘They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.’

Such was Daniel, who cheered his people by announcing their speedy return home.

* Daniel xii. 3.

But, that was not all, or nearly all. He was commissioned by God to tell them what should befall them after that ; how Christ the Messiah would come, and be cut off, but not for Himself,—for He would be sinless,—but, in atonement for the sin of the world. He was to tell them that Christ would make a New Covenant with them and the world, when the Old Covenant, with its Altar and sacrifices and rites, and even their House of Sacrifice itself, would be done away and destroyed for ever. Daniel was even to tell them the exact period when these events should take place. And he did so ; and in our Bibles, at the end of the ninth chapter of his Book, the wonderful prophecy still exists. It required skill and understanding in the prophet himself to comprehend it clearly ; so that we need not be surprised if, with all our advantages in living after its fulfilment, it is somewhat difficult to ourselves. But, let us try ; after considering the circumstance which ushered it in.

When Daniel had told his countrymen of their speedy return home from Babylon, it appears that* he was alarmed, lest by some

* Daniel ix. 1 to end.

unforeseen cause the rebuilding of the Sanctuary and the City should be deferred. So he fasted and prayed and made confession to the Lord his God, and in substance addressed him thus : He humbly reminded God of His Covenant, and owned that He the Lord God had done his part to the full. He confessed, in bitterest terms of remorse, that himself and his people had neglected theirs. 'Therefore,' said he, 'the curse is poured upon us. But, O Lord, I beseech Thee let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain. Hear the prayer of Thy servant and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon Thy Sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline Thine ear and hear ; open thine eyes and behold our desolations and the city which is called by Thy name, for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousness, but for Thy great mercies. O Lord, hear ; O Lord, forgive ; O Lord, hearken and do ; defer not for Thine own sake, O my God ; for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.'

And while Daniel was in the act of praying thus, a wonderful event occurred. The Angel

Gabriel flew swiftly down from heaven, and touched him and talked with him and gave him skill and understanding to comprehend what he was about to reveal. 'At the beginning of thy supplications,—for thou art greatly beloved,'—he said, 'I was sent to show thee what is to be: therefore, understand the matter and consider the vision.'

And then he told him in substance, that within certain fixed periods of time, amounting altogether to seventy* prophetic weeks, it was determined by God that the true and long looked-for Atonement for sin should be made,—Jesus, the most Holy, should be anointed as the Christ,—the Old Covenant, with its sacrifices and oblations, should cease,—the New Covenant should commence,—and the entire vision and prophecy should be sealed up and completed.

Such was the prophecy, generally. But, in order to be exact in so weighty a matter, and to put its fulfilment to the believer beyond a doubt, this general prophecy was divided into three parts.

* A prophetic week being not seven days but seven years.

First, the prophecy was to date* from the commandment given to Ezra to restore *the City*

* First: 'From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince,' said the angel, 'shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.'

Secondly, dating from the end of the first period of seven weeks, shall be reckoned the next period of three score and two weeks. 'And *after* threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off; but not for Himself.'

Thirdly,—not taking the last separate week of the seventy consecutively with the former weeks, for the text does not require it, and history will not allow it,—'And the people of the Prince that shall come, shall [at a certain period after threescore weeks] destroy the City and the Sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And one week [with its events in fulfilment of prophecy] shall confirm the covenant with many. And in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.' Dan. ix. 25, 26, 27.

It will be seen here that instead of the authorised version of v. 27, that of the Septuagint and of the Vulgate has been preferred. The authorised version is, 'And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.' Sept. *καὶ δυναμώσει διαθήκην πολλῇς ἑβδομάς μία*. Vulg. 'Confirmabit autem pactum multis *hebdomada una*.' And the reason for the preference is this: that the latter more clearly suggests the pregnant interpretation of '*the events of one week*.'

(not *the Temple*, which was begun before); and the first part of the prophecy ended with the actual restoration of the City, in seven prophetic weeks.

Secondly, dating from that restoration ‘*unto*’ the public manifestation of the Messiah, there was to be a period of sixty-two prophetic weeks; shortly ‘*after*’ which Messiah was to be cut off, but not for Himself.

From the commencement of the war at Cæsarea it took a week, or seven years, for the Romans to capture Jerusalem and consummate its desolation, by literally (with a few studied exceptions) levelling the whole city and Temple with the ground.

Between three or four years after they had begun the war, the Romans destroyed the Temple, which is never to be rebuilt, and so caused the Altar and its rites to cease for ever.

It must have occupied the remaining three or four years to carry out and consummate this work of devastation with the slow axe and the crowbar, so that not one of those vast and almost immovable stones should remain upon the other, and the city should be as if it had never been inhabited. It is (to my mind) fatal to the ordinary interpretation of this part of the prophecy that thus alone can the prophecy be said to be fulfilled, and by its fulfilment to confirm the faith of many who believed in Daniel, and the Lord of Daniel, and fled in time from the doomed city.

Thirdly, the events of one more prophetical week (completing the seventy weeks) would confirm the faith of many in the new Covenant of Christ. These events were the coming up of the Romans—the agents of the counsel of the Messiah—against Jerusalem; when, in the midst of the week, the Temple would be utterly destroyed, and so the Old Covenant, with the sacrifices and oblations of the Altar, would be brought to a close for ever.

So momentous was the prophecy revealed by the Angel to Daniel. It was fulfilled in every part to the letter, and has tended to confirm the faith of many from the time of its fulfilment to this hour.

As for the prophet himself, all we know of him is, that when the Jews went back, as they shortly did to Jerusalem, he remained in Chaldæa, happy in the last blessed assurance from heaven: ‘Go thou thy way till the end; for,* thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.’

* Dan. xii. 13.

Having received the commission of king Cyrus to rebuild the Temple, the Jews, under Zerubabel, returned to Jerusalem and accomplished their work, raising it on the same foundations, and in the same form, but not with the same magnificence or solemnity—for the precious ark had been destroyed—as before.

After that, by an express command of Artaxerxes, they restored the City itself ‘even in troublous times;’ and the services of the Altar and other rites of Moses were carried on as of old. For it must never be forgotten, that all the divine rites and ceremonies of the Old Covenant were still in full force, and so continued to be for some centuries, till they were absolutely done away at the final overthrow of the Temple by the Romans.

It matters not that the services of the Altar for the most part were formal and insincere: had they been discontinued, the design of them, as types and symbols, would have been lost sight of, and all right, all claim would have been given up by the Jews to be reckoned as God’s chosen people. And their services were formal

and insincere. Taught, indeed, by affliction and experience of God's anger against idolatry, they had dropped the worship of idols; but by degrees they took up in its stead a sin scarcely less grievous—outward worship of the true God, with inward devotion to the world—the strictest form of godliness with an utter denial of its power. I speak of the people as a body. Very beautiful instances of the deepest devotion, very touching scenes of most courageous piety occurred, as in the Maccabees. But, speaking generally, the nearer the time approached for the great revolution, the more had they become depraved. In vain the prophets had cried aloud, and warned them that God hated the sacrifices of the wicked,—that He did not need for Himself, and would not accept such,—that, though He had strictly commanded them to be offered, yet, when offered with a double heart, He loathed the offering, and hated and despised their feasts.

This sin of insincerity so hardened their hearts that they knew not and felt not what they did. It drove them to their last act of blood, leading to their final condemnation, which quickly followed. And when He, to

whom all these sacrifices pointed, actually came to offer Himself, He spoke of those unreal offerings, as the prophets spoke, in * similar terms of unacceptableness in the sight of God. 'Sacrifice and offering, such as this, Thou wouldest not; but a body hast Thou prepared Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, such as these, Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come—in the volume of the Book it is written of Me—to do Thy will, O God.'

Of this great Sacrifice offered, not on the Altar, but on the Cross, it is my intention to speak at large in my concluding Lecture on Sunday next. At present I will simply carry on the argument already begun from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and observe that, 'Above,' when our Lord said, 'Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law,' then said He, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.' He taketh away the First Covenant by Moses, in order that He might establish the Second Covenant made by Himself, Christ Jesus our Lord.†

* Heb. x. 5, 6, 7.

† Heb. x. 8.

This was the will of God from the first, as I have endeavoured to show you. And, my brethren, by the carrying out of His will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

IX.

THE CROSS.

JOHN i. 29.

*‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away
the sin of the world!’*

WE arrive at last at the consummation of the scheme provided for the salvation of man ; and turn from *the Altar to the Cross*.

I must, however, go back for a few moments to those from whom we are about to part, the chosen people of the Old Covenant—the Jews. They have now returned from their captivity. Their Temple and their beloved City are rebuilt ; and as a body they look with chastened pride on their restored but diminished glories.

But the far-seeing believers among them, to whom the mission of the angel Gabriel had been expounded, could not have viewed, without a lingering regret, mixed with higher feelings of hope, their new ‘House of Sacrifice,’ with

its priests and its services and its Altar. A pang must have shot across their hearts to feel that they were only restored to be again destroyed, and destroyed for ever.

The time, however, was yet distant. More than five hundred years had to pass before the great overthrow ; and of the generations which followed them those whose eyes the Lord had opened to see the truth, bore the reflection with subdued and silent wonder. Meanwhile much occurred of painful and important interest.

You who have the happiness to be well acquainted with the grand Book of Daniel the Prophet, will recollect a wondrous prophecy therein relating to the four universal empires of the world.* These empires were to be destroyed one after the other, and were to be succeeded by a universal Spiritual empire which is never to fall.

You recollect that the first universal empire was *Assyria*, with its chief city, the mighty Nineveh. And how the ten revolted tribes were carried off to Assyria. And then, some time afterwards, how the two remaining tribes, called the Jews, were carried off to the neighbouring

* Daniel ii. 31-45.

territory, Chaldæa, with its chief city Babylon. That was in Daniel's time, who, after he had prophesied, witnessed the first great revolution. Daniel witnessed the overthrow of Assyria; and the setting up of the second universal empire,—that of *the Medes and Persians* in Babylon. It was at this time that, the seventy years' captivity being ended, the Jews went back to Judæa and rebuilt Jerusalem.

Then came Alexander of Macedon, and the period of the third universal empire,—*the Macedonian or Greek Empire*. And here we must pause to admire in this change the good providence of God in the care of His Church.

The Greek language was the most beautiful and expressive language ever formed for the communication of thought between man and man. It had now become the language of the civilised nations of the earth; and a century scarcely elapsed before the collected Hebrew Scriptures, with the Chaldee portion of Daniel, were translated into Greek, and so became circulated, with their precious announcements, over the vast universal empire of Greece. It is easy to imagine the result: how the learned heathen would wonder; how the solemn prophecies,

abounding in poetry of the highest order, would tell on the minds of the thoughtful; how the close calculations in the Seventy Weeks of Daniel would awaken inquiry and arouse expectation.

As the date of their fulfilment drew nearer and nearer, the suspense would be mingled with awe. And so it fell out. For again the government of the world was changed, and the fourth universal dominion was given to *Rome*. The language, however, was not changed. For captured Greece took captive the rudeness of her masters. The tongue of the polished Greeks almost everywhere prevailed, and the Scriptures became known.

It came to pass in the end, a few years before the actual coming of the Messiah, that Herod the Great, an Idumæan, was made by the Roman government king of the Jews. He was a vain, ambitious, and cruel man; and no long time elapsed before he pulled down the second Temple built by Zerubbabel, and raised on its foundations a splendid edifice, seemingly all marble and gold, more suited to his pride. And when Jesus, the spiritual king of the Jews, was born at Bethlehem, and tidings of the great

event began to be circulated, Herod, in an ignorant panic of alarm for his throne, would have destroyed Him in a general massacre of the innocents. How the child Jesus escaped; how He was brought up; how He was baptized * at the Jordan, and at His Baptism a voice came from heaven to testify that He was the Son of God, I need not dwell upon now. I hasten to that which is the goal we are tending to,—to that † which, in a few pregnant words, embraces the entire Gospel by which we are saved.

The world, awakened by the loud rumour of prophecy, was now in constant expectation of some extraordinary event. Crowds flocked to the Jordan‡ to be baptized, and to hear a rough outspoken preacher who preached repentance. ‘Repent ye,’ was his cry; ‘Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’ And when they asked him who he was, and whether he was not the expected Messiah, his answer was, ‘No: I am only His messenger, as

* Mat. iii. 13–18.

† John i. 29. ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’

‡ Mat. iii. 5–10; Luke iii. 15–17. John i. 19–28.

the prophet foretold : I am but the Voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord ! ’

At last came * the open manifestation of the great truth. Jesus Himself went down to John at the Jordan ; and, surrounded though he was by the multitude, John saw Him, and pointing to Him, burst out before them all, ‘ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ! ’ And again the next day after, when John stood and two of his disciples, he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and cried out, ‘ Behold the Lamb of God ! ’

You will not forget the text of my opening Lecture, which was, ‘ The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ; ’ that at the Creation it was determined in the counsels of God that His Son—the Lamb of God—should be slain to expiate sin. You know that that figurative Lamb was Christ Jesus ; He, who was the promised Seed of woman ; who was to come through Abraham ; the Seed, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed ; He, who could be traced through David down to the birth in

* John i. 29, 36, 37.

the stable at Bethlehem. And now, at the Jordan, we see the Baptist, the chosen man of God, divinely inspired from his mother's womb, pointing to Jesus, and affirming that He was the very Lamb promised from the beginning, and symbolized and foretold all through, to take away the sin of the world!

To believers in the Bible not another word need be added. All I have got to do now, in conclusion, is to say, that after His appearance at the Jordan, Jesus did as it was written of Him, and died on the Cross, and was buried in the sepulchre hewn out in the Rock.

But, on the third day, He rose again from the dead. And I wish to call your special attention to a circumstance which occurred on the very morning of His Resurrection.* It has a singular bearing on the course we have been pursuing through the whole of these Lectures.

Two of the disciples were going that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was not many miles from Jerusalem, and were talking together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they were com-

* Luke xxiv. 13-27.

muning together and reasoning, Jesus Himself, in His glorified body, drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. And He said unto them, 'What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad?'

And one of them answered, 'Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass in these days?' And He said, 'What things?' And they said, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. And how the chief priests and our rulers have delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him.'

Then, after hearing more that they had to say, He reproved them and said, 'O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory, —are they not all in full accordance with what is foretold of Him?' And then He did the very thing which we have feebly, but with great reverence, attempted to do,—*He began at Moses, and all the Prophets, and expounded to them*

in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

After that, when Jesus had manifested Himself on many occasions during the forty days in which He dwelt in His resurrection body upon earth, He called His disciples together in Jerusalem for the last time. He there reminded them* of what He had said before He was crucified, That all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the Psalms concerning Him. And He opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures, and said, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’

He then descended with them from the city, and led them across the Kedron, and over Mount Olivet as far as to Bethany. And when He came to a certain spot within the confines of the village, He stopped, and addressed them

* Luke xxiv. 44–47.

† Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Mark xvi. 15, 16, 17.

on their solemn duty as His Apostles to mankind. He had before said to them in Galilee, 'All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' And now, with His last breath, He concentrated His command, and impressed it upon them in more awful terms, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but He that believeth not shall be damned.'

And when He had spoken these things He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And as He was in the Act of blessing them, and while their eyes were fastened on Him, He gradually rose from the earth, and was taken up and received into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

They were impressive words indeed which Christ had spoken. And thus favoured, thus divinely instructed in the Scriptures, the

Apostles, at His bidding, went forth and preached everywhere,* the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following.

Their theme everywhere was the atonement. First, Peter went forth and said to the Jews, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you † in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.’ ‘There is no salvation in any one but in Jesus Christ of Nazareth,—none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.’ ‡ ‘To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.’ § ‘Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,—who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world. ||

And Philip to the same effect expounded

* Mark xvi. 20.

† Acts ii. 38.

‡ Acts iv. 12.

§ Acts x. 42, 43.

|| 1 Peter i. 18, 19,

Isaiah to the enquiring eunuch. He was reading in the 53rd chapter of Him, ‘on whom the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all;’ of Him, ‘who was numbered with transgressors and bore the sins of many;’ of Him, who consequently ‘was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities;’ and who, in making ‘His soul an offering for sin, suffered the chastisement of our peace and healed us by His stripes.’ And when the eunuch enquired of Philip, ‘Of whom speaketh the prophet this?’ Philip began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*

And Paul the learned convert went forth and preached Christ to the Jews, and said, ‘Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children. Be it known unto you, therefore, that through† this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be

* Acts viii. 35. Magee on the Atonement, note xlii.

† Acts xiii. 38, 39.

justified by the Law of Moses.' 'Christ our Passover* is sacrificed for us;' Christ, 'who was delivered† for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.'

There was one disciple, however, whom Jesus specially favoured, John the beloved, who made that Sacrifice of the death of his dear Lord his constant theme to the end of time, even when time shall be no more.

We cannot part with him in the way that we have touched so lightly on the teaching of others. It is he who records in his gospel the declaration of the good Shepherd‡ giving His life for the sheep. 'I am that Shepherd,' said Christ. 'I lay down my life for the sheep.' And other sheep I have who are not of this fold of Israel. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall be one fold and one Shepherd.' In his Epistles he says: 'If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is§ the propitiation for our sins.' And again,—

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

† Rom. iv. 25.

‡ John x. 11, 14, 15, 16.

§ 1 John ii. 1, 2; iv. 10.

‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.’

But, in the Revelation, it is the all-pervading topic. It there carries on and completes what was left untold by the prophets aforetime, and leaves with us so vivid a picture of the Lamb of God slain and restored to life again and entered into His glory, that I must dwell on the subject at large. I do so the more readily because the Book of Revelation, in which it is traced, is, alas, so little noticed in the services of our Church, and comparatively so little known.

‘I was in the Isle of Patmos’—says the sainted Apostle,* in substance—‘having been there banished on account of the Word of God I had been preaching and the testimony I had been bearing to the truth of Jesus. On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and wholly absorbed by His influence, when I heard behind me a voice loud and clear as the voice of a trumpet. And I turned to see the Voice that spoke to me; and having turned, I saw one like

* Rev. i. 9-19.

to Him whom I had known in the flesh, the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to His feet. And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, an emblem of the all-conquering power of the Word of God. And His countenance was as the unclouded sun shining in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me and said, "Fear not: I am the First and the Last. I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. Write, then, without fear, the things thou hast seen already; and the things existing in the Church now; and the things which are about to be hereafter."

'Having done His bidding so far, I looked up, and behold a door in heaven was set open;* and a voice said "Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must be hereafter." And immediately I was in the Spirit, and went up and passed through the door.

'And behold a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was resplendent and lucid in appearance like a jasper and a sardine stone; and a rainbow like

* Rev. iv. 1-11; v. 1-14.

an emerald, encircled the throne. And round about the throne were four-and-twenty other thrones; and upon the thrones I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting, representatives of the Church of God upon earth: twelve for the Levitical Church and twelve for the Apostolic, but all for the Church of God and His Christ, the Redeemer of all.

‘And I saw placed on the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, a roll of a Book, the Book of Futurity, inscribed with characters within, and fast sealed at the back with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel with a powerful voice proclaiming “Who is worthy to open the Book of Futurity and to loosen its seals?” And no one in heaven, or in earth, or under the earth,—neither angels, nor men, nor the spirits of men, no being, except One, was able to open the Book, or even to look at what was in it. And I saw that One standing in the midst of the great throne: It was the symbol of the Messiah Himself, a Lamb as it had been slain. It was Jesus, the Messiah, with the wound of the spear and the print of the nails.

‘And He came and took the Book from off the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

And when He took the Book the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, and sang the New Song, "Worthy art Thou to take the Book and to open its seals; for Thou wast slain and didst purchase and redeem the saints out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation!" And the countless angels of heaven responded, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!" And all creatures in the universe cried out, "Blessing and honour and glory and dominion be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!"'

What was contained in the Book of Futurity laid open by Him who was worthy, does not come within the scope of our present inquiry. The point which I have to bring to your notice is the eventful termination: when those whose names are written in the Book of Life, the Book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, will claim the blessings which are there revealed.

The great day, too, is described as having come. Judgment had been passed on the

risen world ; and the scene which the prophet then witnessed was a most glorious one.* For lo, a great multitude which no one could number, of the redeemed out of every tribe and nation and people and tongue stood before the Throne and the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation is ours through God and the Lamb!’

And the angels who had never fallen, gathered round the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell down and worshipped saying, ‘Amen. The blessing and the glory and the thanksgiving and the honour and the power and the might be unto our God for ever and ever!’

And one of the elders addressed me, says the wondering Apostle, and asked, ‘These, who are arrayed in white robes, who are they, and whence do they come?’ And I said unto him, ‘My lord thou knowest.’ And he said, ‘These are they who came safely out from the great trial upon earth. And they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Because they did this they are here,

* Rev. vii. 9-17.

and now stand before God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sitteth upon the Throne shall spread the Tabernacle of His presence over them for ever. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun fall on them in its fierceness, nor any heat. For, the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall tend them, as a Shepherd tends his flock, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'

After this there can be but one overpowering sense of gratitude and devotion in the heart of the believer: 'O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace; Have mercy upon us; Cleanse us with Thy blood, and make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

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